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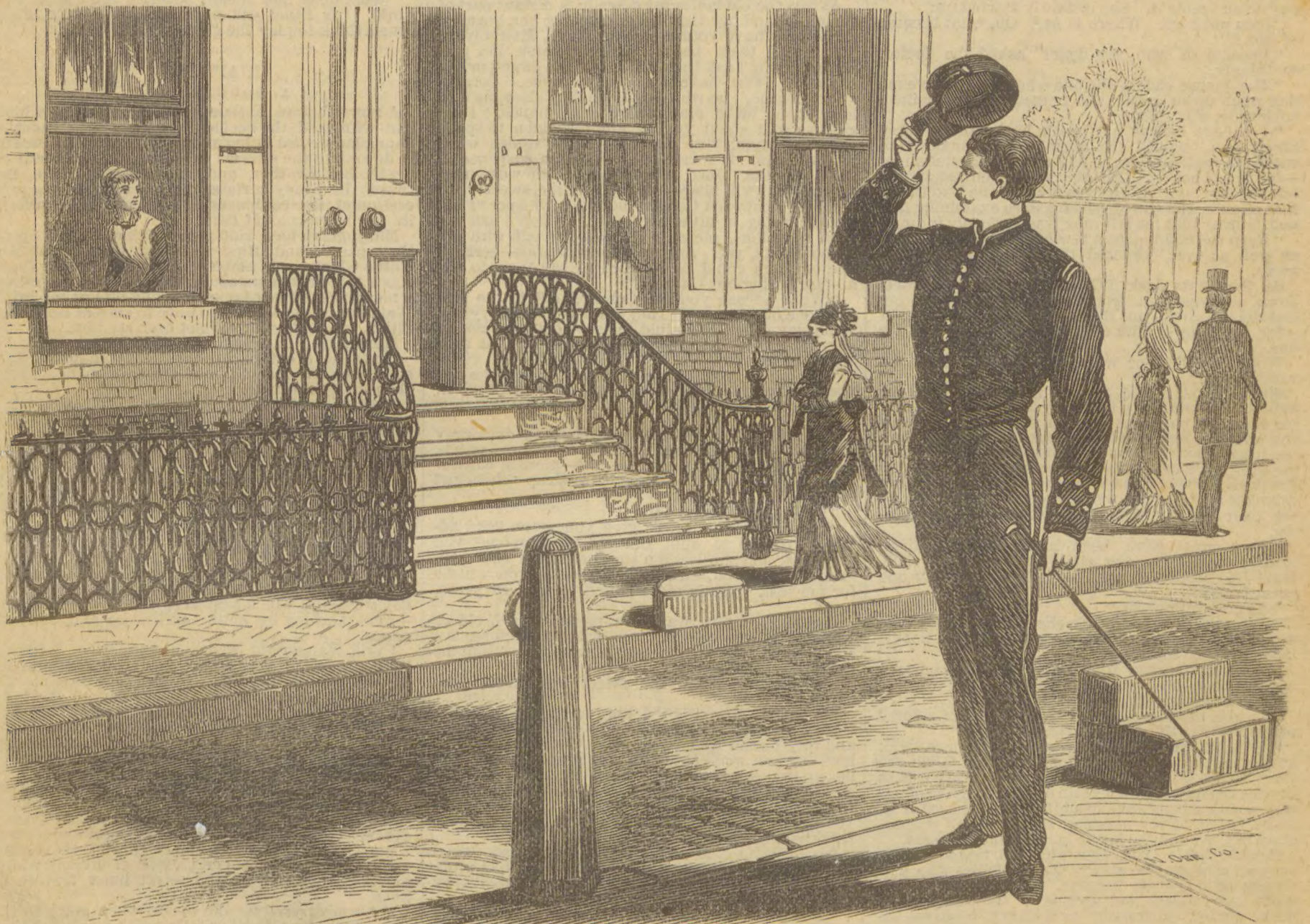
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SHE THREW UP THE SASH, LEANED OUT AND BOWED TO HIM. HE GAVE HER A SLIGHT RETURN, AND HURRIED ON.

## Madcap, the Little Quakeress; OR, THE Naval Cadet's Wooing.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN.

### CHAPTER I.

#### "BLACK SPIRITS AND WHITE."

CORALIE CLYDE was on her way home from the fashionable school of Madame B. in Rittenhouse Square. She had deviated from the direct route, having gone over to Twelfth and Market to provide herself with a package of those costly confections to be found at Whitman's—none of madame's pupils condescended to patronize any cheaper place.

Securing her pound of chocolate-creams, she continued her walk back to Chestnut street, and for a few minutes stood in front of the plate-glass window of a certain goldsmith and jeweler. There were lovely things on display in these windows—things which Coralie coveted with all her heart; but nothing was there half so pretty as herself. At least, so thought a young fellow, in naval uniform, who watched her as admiringly as she did the gems.

There was a certain coquettishness and witchery in her air—a breeziness and airiness of manner which she could no more help than she

could help breathing, for it was inherited from her father, the dead naval captain.

The glance of her dark-gray eyes—generally mistaken for black because so deepened by the shade of thick, long lashes—was bright and free; her brown, curly hair danced about her shoulders; her cheeks were as red as vermeil roses; her lips as sweet and scarlet as strawberries.

Coralie had not stood a moment looking at a diamond necklace before she became conscious that some one was watching her. She did not need to steal a look from under her long eyelashes to know that it was the handsome cadet. Not that she knew his name. He was a stranger to her; but for several days he had actually dogged her footsteps, as she went to and from school, and she was aware of it.

It was charming to have her first admirer! Coralie's heart swelled with pride to think how envious the girls would be should she confide the fact to them. This admirer was a cadet, too—always so interesting a creature to girls, and doubly so to our heroine, because her father had belonged to the navy. She had taken more than one good look at him when he did not know that she was deigning to observe him. He appeared to be twenty or twenty-one, in age; had a fine straight figure, light hair that just missed being pure golden, dark-blue eyes, and a downy mustache lovely to see; so of course he interested her exceedingly. Yet, she had given him no encouragement to follow her about; she was afraid that it was impertinent in him; her Quaker aunts had



reared her too strictly for her to countenance a street-flirtation; and still she could not find it in her heart to speak to a policeman about him.

She stood a few minutes trying to appear unconscious of his presence, though the roses in her cheeks began to flame; then turned and walked away, not too abruptly.

It was a crisp, bright October day, and Chestnut street was crowded. Coralie went along briskly, but her thoughts were preoccupied, so that she paid little heed to things about her. Suddenly she heard loud shouts and cries of warning, and stood as if paralyzed. A pair of horses attached to one of those immense two-wheeled drays peculiar to the Quaker City, had taken fright, and were dashing along at a perilous speed, coming directly toward her where she stood stone-still in the middle of the crossing, while alarmed pedestrians were flying in all directions.

The runaway team were almost upon her, yet she stood actually unable to make a motion. At that instant of extreme peril some one sprang in front of the horses. She saw who it was—saw the determined face of the unknown cadet—saw him stretch out his hand to grasp the bit of the animal nearest to him—saw him dragged from his feet, and hurled down under the horses; then she, herself, was seized from behind, and all became a blank—she had fainted dead away. When Coralie recovered consciousness she was in bed, with her aunts and the family physician beside it. She instantly started up:

"I am not hurt. Where is he? Oh, what became of him?"

"Because of who, my dear?" asked the doctor, soothingly.

"The young cadet—the one who tried to save me and went down under the horses," she explained, with wide, wild eyes.

"I believe he was not much hurt. Don't worry about him," replied the doctor, more anxious to soothe his patient than to be exact in his statement—for it was not true that the young gentleman was but slightly injured. He was lying in the hospital at that minute, and the physicians were examining him and fearing that his left lung was seriously injured.

"Keep the child quiet a few hours and she will be as well as ever," ordered the doctor, as he went away.

So the aunts tucked Coralie in, drew the blinds down, and went out from her chamber on tiptoe. But the girl could not sleep—could not even lie still—for thinking of him who had risked his life for her.

Would he die?—or worse—be maimed or an invalid for life?

She crept out of bed, dressed herself, pulled up the blind of one window a little way and sat down by it; for she could not bear her own thoughts, and knew she would be reproved if she went down-stairs before tea-time. There she sat for two mortal hours brooding over her fears. No wonder she was pale when she finally went down to the tea-table; or that her relatives made a fuss over her, curiously compounding their petting with an equal quantity of scolding.

"Thee must have been particularly heedless, niece, to be in the street without looking about thee. Have I not told thee that heedlessness was thy one great fault?"

"Yes, aunt Priscilla."

"The child is as white as a sheet. What took thee out of thy straight course home?—that did not lie through Chestnut street."

"No, aunt Charity; it was chocolate creams took me that way—and after all, I lost them."

"Too much sweets will spoil thy teeth."

"I'll risk them, auntie. George,"—to the colored servant—"has the evening paper come?"

"We ain't got it, missa," responded George, who, at the request of Miss Featherlight, had taken the sheet to the kitchen and burned it to prevent Miss Coralie from reading a certain item descriptive of her afternoon's adventure and adding that the hero of it, Cadet Leigh, of the steamer Mohawk, was desperately injured and lay in the hospital unconscious.

Featherlight! Yes, this was the inappropriate cognomen of the two elderly Quaker ladies who had charge of our little heroine. The Misses Featherlight were sedate and serious to the last degree. Rich, quaint, Quakerish, prejudiced, positive—belonging to those very respectable "first families"—dressed always in dove-colored silk and sheer muslin caps—could there be anything better than they were? Their niece had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being reared by them, her parents having died within a year of each other, when their daughter was a very little thing indeed. Sometimes the girl, in the exuberance of youth and beauty, and conscious power, pulled so recklessly as to break their apron-strings and plunge them into despair, but, usually, she was gentle and sweet to them, while they adored her even when she tormented them most.

"I wish I could see the paper," Coralie reiterated, as she went into the elegant but prim drawing-room with her aunts. "Oh, Mr. Garwell, I'm so glad you came! You will tell me what they say about the accident, I know?" she cried, before the ladies had time to courteously greet their caller—a young gentleman of twenty-eight or thereabouts, dressed in snobbish style and wearing the air of a man of the world.

"It is *you* who must tell me about it, Miss Clyde! Good-evening, ladies. I come to inquire, as I see by the papers—"

"Do they say he was much hurt?" broke in Coralie, regardless of anything but this terrible suspense.

"He was struck in the side, I believe," was the careless answer, for a glance from Miss Priscilla had warned him not to betray the whole truth. "Miss

Clyde, it made me quite ill to think of your narrow escape."

Coralie knew perfectly well that John Garwell was her lover—at least, that he was after her and her money—and that her relatives approved of him. She would have "laughed in her sleeve" as he bowed over her dimpled hand with such an air of unspeakable devotion—only, she did not then feel like laughing. Her thoughts were all in that cruel hospital. The handsome cadet was her hero now. Never, never, never, so long as the grateful heart in her bosom should beat would she forget him! Never! His image was impressed upon her very soul as she saw him in that frightful moment, brave, beautiful, risking his life to save hers. Ah! it was a heroic act!

"John Garwell is incapable of such a deed!" she thought, as she looked at that personage paying court-compliments to her aunts. "I detest him—I know I do; and I admire—I love that brave, dear fellow—my poor, poor boy! I wish I were in the hospital by his side. It is only *right* that I should be there. Yet, when I asked my aunts to take me they were amazed. I will go to-morrow—there! If they choose to go with me, all right!—if not, I will go alone."

"I wish that tiresome Mr. Garwell would stay at home! Why does he come here to-night, to torment me? I'll make him sorry he came—old flirt and fortune-hunter!"

At this the old ladies sat down in a distant part of the room, and her visitor, approaching her, began:

"Where have your thoughts flown, Miss Clyde? May I call them back? Will you think me presumptuous if I ask that you give me a large portion of them? You have nearly all of mine. Coralie, sweet Coralie," he whispered, bending close, as if to look at the bit of embroidery in her hands, "I am getting wild about you. I am forbidden to speak by your aunts; but, prudence must vanish when love appears. It is cruel to keep me in suspense all these months. Just whisper—one little word, that no one but I will hear—*can you love me, sweet?*"

"No!" answered Coralie, not in a whisper at all, and laughing a little nervously. "Don't ask me such questions, please. I'm not through with my school-books, yet. Ask one of my aunts—perhaps one of them could be induced to say 'yes' to the all-fascinating Mr. Garwell!"

"What a tease you are, Coralie," still in the low, soft tone of a lover. "They want you to marry me, some day—they have told me so—some day not so very far away. I am looking forward to that time with a long—"

"I'd advise you to use your field-glass—the one you take to the race-course, you know—to find it, Mr. Garwell, for it is far, far in the future—that time is."

She raised the mischievous, dazzling, dark-gray eyes full to his face as she made this saucy speech, and he saw that she was in earnest—more in earnest than he had dreamed such a madcap school-girl could be.

"Coralie, you are cruel!"

"No, I am kind. I will give you some good advice. Propose to aunt Charity. It is money you are after; and she has ten times as much as I. Besides, she is good, and her influence on you will be for the best. She is more suited to you in years, too."

The elegant flirt was nonplused; no girl, old or young, had ever been so frank with him before. An angry flush rose to his face for a moment; but he thought it best to laugh.

"You are cynical, for sweet seventeen, Miss Clyde."

"I don't know what I am," responded Coralie; "but I do know that I don't like men who gamble, and race horses and break girls' hearts. If I ever love any one well enough to marry him he shall be nearly my own age, brave as a hero, handsome as—as—oh, awfully handsome!—and true and faithful to me; somebody who has never been in love before, you know," and she looked at him again with those fearless eyes of hers.

"Indeed! A charming picture, I confess!—something like that of the foolish cadet who has probably ruined his good looks for life in that foolhardy feat of which I read to-night."

"It was a foolhardy feat, perhaps," said Coralie, in a very low, sweet voice, the tears coming into her eyes, "but it saved my life."

John Garwell, when he heard those liquid tones and saw those shining tears, was more intensely annoyed than ever.

With that perversity which makes a part of poor human nature, this man, who had wooed and cast aside many an easily-won heart, now that this madcap of a school-girl refused to be dazzled by him, began in earnest to fall in love with her. He was angry with her—he was jealous of this cadet who had saved her life—but he was determined to conquer this scorn and indifference—to make Coralie like him.

"Who has told you that I bet, gamble and flirt, Coralie?" he asked, changing the subject. "I did not know that I was the victim of the sewing societies, and other feminine clubs, where the reputations of us men are handled without gloves."

"I never said you did those things," answered Coralie, bursting into musical laughter; and, rising, she ran to the piano and began to sing a gay snatch, to stop the conversation.

The Misses Featherlight had been so far persuaded out of the articles of their belief, that they had allowed "that spoiled child" a piano!

"I shall have my hands full with taming her," thought John Garwell, sullenly. "But, tame her I will! She has aroused my will—for good or evil—and she shall bend to it. She shall be my wife, if

only to have revenge on her, for her charming impertinence.

"I mustn't show my hand too plainly at first," he mused, as he walked on toward home a half-hour later. "I'll frighten her. By Jove! she's a sharp one! I couldn't recover from the blows she gave me. Had to back out. She 'don't like men who gamble, race horses, and break girls' hearts,' eh? I'll pay her off for that. If she knew how malicious I am she would not dare to be quite so plain-spoken. Hallo, Green, what's this?" to his father's footman, who placed a note in his hand, as he went in after ringing the door-bell.

"Left for you, sir."

John opened the envelope under the light of the hall lamp.

"Lady's writing," he thought, with a feeling of relief; for he was always thinking of his debts and his duns.

"MY DEAR MR. GARWELL," the note said, "My cousin Ethel seems in very low spirits. Was there not an *affaire de cœur* between you two? It seems rather cruel that you should remain away when she needs your sympathy. Not that I have any business to interfere—Ethel would be *very angry* with me if she knew of it, so please don't mention it to her. You would do no more than your duty to pay her a visit of condolence; don't you agree with me?"

"Sincerely, MYRA WAINWRIGHT."

"What does *that* mean?" queried the man of the world. "Is Ethel still hoping?—or does the little cousin think to play the game herself?"

## CHAPTER II.

### A DOUBLE LOSS.

A MONTH before that sunny October morning which had witnessed the accident to the young cadet, a young lady stood at her room window gazing drearily down into the street. It was the most superb of September weather, and, as she stood there, between the heavy curtains of gray satin, a long procession of fine equipages swept along the street on its way to Fairmount Park.

Many gentlemen, riding or driving, looked up as they passed and lifted their hats to the beautiful statue which made no response. One among them was a tall, dark man, of nearly thirty years, riding a magnificent black horse. At any other time Ethel Wainwright's cheek would have flushed at his recognition, but to-day she did not even see him.

Her father was dying in another room!

Senseless, breathing heavily, he lay as he had lain since they discovered him on the floor of the library, the previous evening.

It would seem that he had felt the illness coming on, for his desk was open, and lying upon it was a paper of importance, not completed.

He had not revived in the least, even for a few moments, and was now fast sinking, and never would conclude what he had endeavored to put in writing.

The physician and friends had at last overpersuaded the daughter to leave his bedside for an hour's rest, promising to call her at the slightest change. Instead of lying down as they advised she had gone to the window and stood there in a cold stupor, while the world—that bright, successful, gay world of which yesterday she had been a part—went flashing by in its careless joy and extravagance.

Cyril Wainwright was a gentleman of large inherited wealth; hence when his only daughter returned from her *pension* in Paris, she became the queen of a courtly circle. Especially had she been the idol of her fond father, who answered her slightest wish with all the devotion of a doting parent. Such indulgences would have spoiled many girls, but not Ethel. She had spirit and intelligence as well as personal loveliness.

A trifle above medium height, with a slender, supple figure, a proud head set superbly on a smooth white neck; abundant silken chestnut hair; eyes of darkest hazel, at once passionate, sweet and tender; a mouth of lovely curves and color; all these charms were enhanced by a complexion of creamy whiteness, soft and rich as the velvet inner texture of lilies.

She was dressed for the opera, when going to the library, gayly calling her father with word that they were late, she had found him on the floor, irresponsible to her cry of alarm, breathing stertorously. Since then she had not changed her dress—had done nothing but sit near his bed with a pale, stricken look. Some one had taken off her lace hat, hours before; otherwise, as she stood by the window, she was in her evening toilet even to the once blooming tea-rose which lay withering in the bosom of her dress—a dress of thick satin almost the shade of the rose, a pale yellow, with a blush of crimson through it, and with a broad founce of old Venetian point as yellow as the robe. Two strings of pearl glimmered in the dark haunt of her hair, which was done up high on her graceful head, and a rope of pearls gleamed on her neck.

If some beauty of Gainsborough's time had stepped down from one of his canvases Ethel might have been mistaken for her.

But her witching wit and gayety were gone now; her cheeks were pale, and there were heavy shadows under her listless eyes.

Presently into her room came some one with a step that made no sound on the thick carpet—a little creature with noiseless motions, small features, and a face that would have been plain but for the large, blue eyes, which had a questioning look like those of a child, albeit their owner was twenty—a year older than her cousin Ethel.

Gliding up to the motionless figure by the win-



dow, and laying her tiny bit of a thin hand on the arm which quivered at being touched, she spoke:

"Cousin Ethel!"

"Has any thing happened, Myra?" asked Ethel, with dry lips.

"They want you to come, Ethel. There has been a change, and they want you to—to—"

"My father is dying!" cried Ethel, and ran toward his room.

It was true; as his daughter entered the room the stricken man expired. Without a word, a look of farewell, gone forever!

With a cry that rung through the house she threw herself on her knees by the bed, drooped her head on his moveless breast, and remained there a long time almost as quiet as the dead. They had, at last, to lift her up and carry her away by main force.

The three days which followed were ever afterward like blank darkness to Ethel.

On the third day Myra and their dressing-maid came to her bedside, and her cousin, in soothing, tender tones, asked her if she wished to be dressed to go down-stairs and listen to the funeral services; then they robed her in black, stifling garments, and helped her down to that dim drawing-room, where she stood a few moments taking a last look of her dead earthly idol. Then they led her away to a smaller room where she reclined on a sofa, ill and wretched, but where she could hear the comforting words spoken by the clergyman.

Then there was a soft bustle in the rooms; her cousin came in, with her bonnet on, to kiss her; the hall-door closed; carriages drove away from before the house, and those left at home to watch over her found Ethel in a dead faint.

The day following that of the funeral Ethel was summoned to the library to hear the reading of the will. Her father's lawyer was there, and her cousin, and others. Half-fainting, Ethel sunk into a chair; the forms about her seemed like specters. There never had been on this earth a more devoted daughter than she; and, when the reading of the will began, the lawyer's voice sounded far away and indistinct; she was not thinking of the will at all.

Other ears, especially those of Myra Wainwright, heard every word only too eagerly.

Not until Mr. Dobell spoke directly to her, in a raised voice, did Ethel pay the least attention.

Then suddenly and vividly, she comprehended what was going on.

"To Ethel—commonly called Ethel Wainwright, and understood to be my daughter—I leave ten thousand dollars in cash, to be paid as soon as possible out of my estate. She is no child of mine; and the circumstances under which she has been imposed upon me as such, and which have but lately been made known to me, are such as to offend my sentiments of right and honor. I do her more than justice when I leave her the sum named above.

"To Myra Wainwright, my brother's daughter, who at least has the Wainwright blood in her veins, I leave the whole estate, with the exception of the \$10,000 above named, and the legacies to charitable societies enumerated below. The gift is unequivocal, and includes my bonds and mortgages, railroad-stock, landed property, oil-stock, my house, with the furniture thereof, on Walnut street; all my personal property and the money in bank, whereof an account is appended.

"Ethel is to have the right of a home in this house for one year, and retain absolute possession of her jewels, wardrobe and all personal effects previously given her."

This was the substance of the document upon which the few present hung with breathless amazement.

Myra sat quite still, making no exclamation, nor did she speak when the reading was quite finished. There grew a red spot in either cheek and her great blue eyes shone with a sudden curious light. She stole one swift glance across the room at her cousin, who had arisen and was gazing fixedly in the face of the attorney.

Mr. Dobell was evidently nervous under that gaze.

He hastily produced another paper—a sheet of foolscap which had never been folded or sealed.

"Whatever be the mystery surrounding your birth, Miss Ethel," he began, his voice quivering, "it is certain that the deceased loved you as a daughter, and repented of the hasty will made in anger only six weeks ago. Here is the incomplete will, found under his hand, upon which he was at work when the fatal stroke deprived him of the power to finish it. It deserves Miss Myra Wainwright's consideration; and must appeal to her sense of justice. It reads, as far as it goes, thus:

"Being in feeble health, but of sound mind and good judgment, I, Cyril Wainwright, do hereby revoke all other wills made by me, and do aver that this is my last will and testament.

"To Ethel, my adopted daughter, who is as dear to me as if really my child, I leave all my possessions of every kind, bonds and mortgages, oil-stocks, railroad-stocks, real estate, money and personal property, with the exceptions mentioned below, viz.: \$10,000 to my niece, Myra, and a similar sum to be equally divided between the three societies, as I shall designate below. And I recommend to my beloved adopted daughter, Ethel, to continue to Myra the home and protection hitherto afforded her. Ethel, being now nineteen years of age, is to have no guardian, but to manage the property as she chooses; and I recommend her to retain, as her adviser and man of business, my friend and attorney, Jacob Do—" Here the writing ran off wildly into a mere scratch.

"You see what the real intention was?" remarked the lawyer to Myra, as if he would ask her what she was going to do about it.

"What is the law?" The voice of the little cousin was hard and cold.

"The last will as I told you is unsigned, but—"

"The first remains the legal one?"

"I suppose so—for the present."

"That is all I want to know, Mr. Dobell. And now, if there is an attempt made to break the will, which you yourself declare to be the legal one, may I engage you to conduct the defense?"

The lawyer stared at the fairy-like young lady in blank astonishment.

"By Jupiter! that is cool and keen!" he muttered under his breath. "The hand of steel under the velvet glove!" then, after a brief hesitation: "Miss Myra, there is such a thing as equity, as well as law. My dead friend desired to make me the adviser of his adopted daughter Ethel. I feel myself retained by her. If there is any trouble I shall act for her, you may be sure; yes! if she never pays me a dollar. And I warn you that, if my client makes an effort to break the will, I believe she will succeed. Equity triumphs over the letter of the law, sometimes."

Meantime Ethel stood quite still, pale as a ghost in her black dress, murmuring over and over to herself:

"Not his daughter! Not my own father's daughter! Whose daughter am I then, I wonder?" and she looked down, bewildered, at her mourning garments.

As she stood, whispering wildly, half out of her senses, Myra crossed over to her.

"Don't mind it, Ethel," she said. "I will be a sister to you. You shall not want for anything if the property is mine."

Already the modest dependent assumed a tone of patronage.

Ethel turned her soul-reading eyes upon her in a sudden calm, superior surprise.

"What is that you say, Myra?"

Myra colored and fidgeted; she had been used to accepting favors poured out upon her with lavish munificence by her cousin; and her new position of patron was embarrassing even to her at first.

"I mean that you must consider this house your home," she replied, rallying, "and let everything go on as before. There is room for you as well as me. I want you to remain with me, cousin Ethel, as my friend and companion. I shall be at a loss what to do with all my property, at first, you see!"

A flash of lightning disdain leaped out of Ethel's eyes.

"Poor little Myra," she answered, "are matters thus with you?"

The great blue eyes fell despite of their owner's attempt to look innocent; Myra felt suddenly called upon to examine the binding of a book in a case standing near.

Startled out of her deep grief by the shock of all this, Ethel turned to Mr. Dobell:

"Since you helped to draw up the will, a few weeks ago, do you not know it is the fact that I am not what I thought I was?"

"My dear young lady, I know nothing of this strange affair. I have puzzled my brain over it, hours at a time, since the will was drawn up. Intimate as were our relations, I did not venture to question Mr. Wainwright, since he did not see fit to tell me. I only know that a little over six weeks ago he sent for me to come, that evening, and help him get his will into shape; that I came, and he was greatly agitated; that something appeared to have disturbed him on that day; that when I looked up, in wonder at the declaration that you were not his daughter, there came on his face an expression which checked all questions I felt inclined to ask. He was never so well after that. I noticed it, and felt uneasy about him."

"It grows upon my memory," murmured Ethel, "that a strange personage visited papa—Mr. Wainwright, I mean, one day, about that time. I remember it, because I chanced to be passing through the hall at the time, while she was parleying with the servant; and she was such a singular, foreign-looking woman, and eyed me so sharply."

"I would give half my own poor fortune, Miss Ethel, if your father—I must call him so!—had been given time to sign that last will," said Mr. Dobell, earnestly, in an undertone—for Myra still stood as if listening—"I cannot bear to see you, so proud and so worthy, placed in a subordinate position."

"I thank you for being my friend. But, how strange that you should have been told nothing! I must have had parents—where, who are they? I am robbed even of the privilege of loving and mourning," very sadly and hopelessly.

"No, no, Miss Ethel, do not say that! Remember that your father repented of his harshness, and calls you, in that last paper, his dear adopted daughter. I knew that he idolized you. His heart was wrapped up in you."

"Yet he has taken everything from me—even my name! He says I have none of his blood in my veins—he speaks of Myra's blood—yet he does not tell me to whom I belong. In there no one in this wide world to whom I can cling? Am I alien to all the happy people in this world?" beginning to sob wildly. "Alas! I am homeless, fatherless and nameless! Who, who, was ever so desolate as I?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ROSE THAT BLOOMED IN A HOSPITAL.

As Coralie Clyde was brushing out her lovely hair before her mirror the morning after the accident, preparatory to going down to breakfast—lovely hair, brown, but full of golden lights, and wayward

as the girl herself, breaking into a thousand curls and tendrils, determined to have its own way—she allowed the brush to fall from her hand, as she said to her own reflected image:

"I shall not go to Madame's this morning. I know where I shall go! I'm bound to pay a visit to my hero—to my poor, poor, glorious boy—my Bertram Leigh! My aunts say it would not be proper; but what do I care for the proprieties when perhaps he is dying, without friends, in that ugly hospital? No doubt my aunts will go there to-day to ask after him and thank him, but they will be so formal, so cold, while I—oh, I know what I shall do; I shall cry my eyes out over him!" and then Coralie sprang up and made a dash for the water in the basin, for the tears had come and she did not want her eyelids to become red.

She ate so little breakfast that the dove-colored ladies inquired gently if she were ill.

"No, no, dear aunts; but the mornings are growing shorter, you see, and I have no time to dawdle over oatmeal," and she left the table, kissed the soft, pale cheeks of each, asked to be excused, and hurried away.

"I wish she had waited for the cmelette," murmured Miss Charity. "I'm afraid, Priscilla, our niece will never take to porridge, just because it is good for her."

Ah! no oatmeal porridge for Coralie that morning! She was in that state of excitement when the scroll triumphs over sense—when it seems a very commonplace thing indeed to be hungry. No stupid lessons for her either!

She first bent her steps toward a florist's in the next street, where she procured a costly and fragrant bouquet of cut flowers, for the young lady was not limited in the amount of her pin-money. Having secured this she took the car running toward the hospital to which the papers said he had been conveyed. Very shortly after she stood, with crimson cheeks and fast-beating heart, before the warder. She was not refused admittance, but directed on and on, until she found herself in the ward where patients were treated who had received accidental injuries.

Coralie had never been in such a place before. She turned pale as death, and felt tempted to run away; but she mastered her faintness and crept after the attendant until she came to one of the many long, narrow couches, and saw a figure motionless under its white coverings.

Just for one cowardly moment Coralie shut her eyes; then opened them to meet a pair of dim blue ones fixed on her in a rapture of surprise. She saw a pale face, a mass of golden light hair which curled at the ends though cropped so close; two slim, brown hands folded over the counterpane. The attendant had passed on to others leaving the visitor alone with her hero.

The beds on either side chanced to be vacant, so that no one was near enough to further embarrass Coralie.

"Sit down, please," said the cadet, indicating with a motion of his hand the chair at the head of his bed. "Turn it, please, so I can see your face," and he smiled, radiantly; but his voice was so low and faint that Coralie felt frightened.

"You don't think it wrong—bold—for me to come to see you, do you Mr. Leigh? You know, I could not find out just how seriously you might be injured—and so I could not rest, not knowing but that you—had sacrificed your life to save mine. Oh, I pray it is not so bad as that. My aunts will come to see you to-day; but I was—was afraid they would not tell you how grateful—and sorry—I feel. I wanted to see you myself, and tell you; and bring you these flowers," and having said all this in a hurried, tremulous manner, she laid the sweet flowers close to the pale face on the pillow, smiling and blushing.

Any one could tell what an innocent, if impulsive, child she was, by one glance into her expressive face.

"I don't know how to thank you, Miss Featherflight. You must be an angel of goodness to come here to see me."

"Oh, no! My aunts don't think I'm an angel, I assure you. And my name is Clyde—Coralie Clyde; it is only my aunts who are Featherflights. You must not thank me for anything, after what you did for me, Mr. Leigh. I learned your name by the papers—Bertram Leigh."

"Do you like the name?" he asked, feebly smiling, unable to take his gaze from the sweet, fresh face before him.

"I do, indeed. I kept saying it over to myself, last night—Bertram Leigh."

"And I like yours still more," he said, delightedly.

"Perhaps you ought not to talk," Coralie suddenly suggested.

"The doctors did forbid it. But, how can I help it?"

Coralie drew a soft, cool, perfumed rose from the bunch and laid it lightly on his lips.

"There! you cannot talk now. I will say all there is to be said. I'm coming to see you every day until you are able to leave this horrid place. And now I must be going. I shall be awfully late at Madame's as it is. But I will come to-morrow. Ah, there is the doctor! Now, I'm going to wait until I hear what he says about you."

The medical man smiled at the rose which sealed the lips of his young patient; he felt his pulse, then turned to the visitor.

"He is doing well, young lady, very well. Pulse stronger and less rapid. Run away now, little one, for I must look to the injured side. By the way, this is Coralie Clyde, isn't it?"

"Yes, doctor. My aunts are coming to-day."



But I couldn't wait on their deliberate movements—for, you see, he saved my life!"

"He did a very good deed then, Miss Coralie; and I'll do my best to save his," laughing. "Now, run away."

Coralie was not so very late at Madame's, after all; but she failed shamefully in some of her exercises, for her thoughts were not where they ought to have been.

When she returned home she learned that her kind aunts had visited the hospital, with little bunches of flowers for all the patients, and a basket of fruit and jellies for her especial patient; and that he was pronounced out of danger, now that the effects of the shock had not proved fatal.

"May I go with you, to-morrow, when you go to see him, dear aunts?"

"What! thee to visit a young gentleman? No, indeed, child! Thee does not consider the proprieties!"

"Very well. It's a thousand times more delightful to go alone," thought willful Coralie.

The next day she delayed her visit until after school, so that she might stay longer. She found a pair of blue eyes looking for her with restless eagerness.

"You have nearly brought my fever back, keeping me in suspense so long," was his greeting. "But you are here, at last," and he sighed contentedly as his head fell back on the pillow.

"Let me put the withered flowers in my basket—here are fresh ones. And these black Hamburgs are delicious; try them."

She fed the luscious grapes to him, one by one. A faint glow came into his pale cheeks and his faded eyes brightened.

"Had you noticed me, following you about the streets?" he began, when he had eaten the last luscious grape.

"Following me?" cried Coralie, slyly.

"Yes. If I had not fallen into that bad habit I should not have been near enough to save you from those horses."

"Is that so? But explain yourself, Mr. Leigh."

"I will, if you will promise to call me Bertram."

"Let me hear the explanation first."

"There is no explanation. Only—I fell dead in love with you the first time I saw you."

"Oh!" murmured the gipsy, looking down and coloring.

"I did, indeed. So deep that I shall never get out again."

"Hush! that man across the aisle might hear you!"

"Let him hear! It will do him good. Yes, I love you, Miss Clyde, madly, desperately. I did not mean to say this to you before I had made your acquaintance in the regular way. I meant to be prudent and honorable. I try to be honorable in all my actions, Miss Clyde. But, how can I help telling you, when you are such an angel as to come and see me, and bring me these blessed flowers, and take such an interest in me?"

"I don't know," murmured Coralie.

"I don't expect you to love me in return," ran on the cadet, rather wildly, "for I am poor and you are rich."

"But I do!" said Coralie, earnestly, her cheeks red as the crimson rose she was swinging by its stem.

"Do—do love me, do you mean?" gasped the young cadet.

"Yes, ever since you risked your life for me."

"I am afraid it is only gratitude, Miss Clyde. You are fond of me, perhaps, for what I did for you. You are generous and good, and I thank you. But your relatives will never allow you to become attached to a roving fellow like me. You will never be allowed to love me, Coralie," sadly.

"I'm my own mistress, in some things," retorted the girl, gayly. "My mamma fell in love with a sailor, too—a gallant captain in the navy—and her relatives did not like it. They did all they could to break off the match—but she married him!" triumphantly.

"And you will marry me, some day?" demanded Bertram Leigh, rising on his elbow, and looking in her drooped face with sparkling eyes.

"Perhaps—if you want me to," flashing a glance at him which set his blood to dancing through his veins.

Their eyes did all the talking for the next few minutes. Then a sharp pain in the injured side caused Bertram to sink back, nearly fainting. But he rallied presently, and began, in a weak voice, to tell this lovely girl by his side something of his history:

"Coralie, I have no father, mother or relatives that I know of in the world. I do not even know if my name is truly mine; I do not know who my parents were. I was brought to this country, when a little child of six, by a gentleman who took a fancy to me. This gentleman is not wealthy; but he has educated me, and, by his influence, got me a place in the Naval Academy at Annapolis. I ought not to expect that he will do any more for me. I feel that I must, from this point, make my own way. I have recently been placed on board a Government ship, now in port here for a few weeks; but ordered to sail for the coast of China, the first of December. You see what my prospects are:

"A life on the ocean wave,

small wages, an unsettled life, a few months on land to years at sea—a dark future contrasted to yours, Coralie."

"I don't care; I like sailors!" avowed the girl, with decision.

"Thank you for that, my own brave darling!"

"And I have money of my own. Not so much as

my aunts have; but I have \$75,000 out at interest, Bertram; and that is not to be—sneezed at," she concluded, inelegantly.

"You do not think I would let you support me?"

"Why not?"

"Because I have some pride, I hope. I foresee, too, the displeasure of your aunts, and all manner of difficulties. But, Coralie, if you are really willing to promise to be faithful to me through all, I shall take heart and fight all these difficulties till they are vanquished."

"We are very young, Bertram; we have years in which to give you a chance. I know you will succeed."

"Indeed, I am determined to do that. And, Coralie, I will confide to you that lately—within a few months—I have discovered a clew to my birth, which may lead to a knowledge of my family. Some instinct assures me that I shall not be ashamed of my lineage. I was glad to have a few weeks in Philadelphia; for it is in this city that my search must begin."

"Yet here you are, losing time in this dreary hospital."

"No, darling Coralie, not losing time, but gaining you! Think of that! If you had not found me here suffering you would never have fallen in love with me. I'm not so vain as not to realize that."

"Perhaps it is only pity I feel, after all," said the tease, putting on a look of trouble.

"Don't torture me, Coralie! I'm not strong enough to stand it."

"I should hate to be the death of you."

"Then take that back and vow that you do love me."

"I'll think of it, sir."

"You are cruel, Coralie."

"I know it. I told you I was no angel."

"But you are, even when you are heartless."

"If I am heartless, it must be you have stolen my heart. I had one yesterday."

"There! Now you are my darling again."

"How foolish you are, Bertram! I'm certain that man with his leg in plaster-of-paris is laughing at us."

"That is healthy for him. By the way, Coralie, do you know a family by the name of Wainwright living in this goodly Quaker city?"

"There is a family of Wainwrights on Walnut street. My aunts visit there occasionally. The father, Cyrill Wainwright, died about a month ago; and I have heard—I'm sure I do not know or understand the case—but I have heard my aunts talking of it—that, when his will was read, he disowned his daughter Ethel, his only child, and made his brother's daughter his heir. I know it is thought very strange, and that there has been some excitement about it."

Again Bertram Leigh raised on his elbow in his eagerness to listen, while the color came and went in his face.

"Cyrill—Cyrill. That was one of the names I wanted. I'm positive, now, that I have a clew! Ah! I wish I were able to set about my search, this hour!"

"You will not be able very soon, young man, unless you obey orders better," said the voice of the surgeon, who was making his afternoon rounds; and Bertram lay meekly back, while Coralie, blushing, pulled her hat over her eyes, and went away.

It was to be expected that the patient should be feverish and sleepless that night. He had the second link of the chain of evidence which he hoped to forge—and he had an avowal of love from the sweet lips of a glorious girl.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE LITTLE COUSIN.

A MONTH had crawled onward since Cyrill Wainwright's sudden death. Ethel had learned, as the long weeks went slowly by, how long such weeks can be—how slowly time can pass.

She had something even worse to bear than grief for her loss, or than that stranger misfortune which had befallen her—intense as her suffering had been for these. It was a new revelation to her, this possibility of suffering inflicted by the lagging minutes. Ethel had never watched and waited before—Ethel, the proud, the ever-sought-after, whose smile or word had been watched for as treasures.

But that was in the past. She was not an heiress now; and, indeed, did she, or any one, know what she was?

All these days and weeks she had waited for some one to come who had failed her; some one from whom she had a right to expect tenderest sympathy at such a time—who should have flown to her side at the first intimation that she was in trouble.

Ethel, though not exactly "engaged" to John Garwell, had reason to consider their relation the same as if they had been formally affianced. On the evening previous to Mr. Wainwright's sudden illness John had remained late, and on engaging her company to the opera for the following night, had said to her, retaining her hand at parting:

"Ethel—may I call you Ethel?—we have been friends for some time; but I can be satisfied with your friendship no longer. Am I mistaken in believing that you have the same regard for me as I for you?"

Then when she blushed, and hesitated for a reply, he went on:

"To-morrow, when I come, may I speak to your father? Say that I may! Such sweet silence surely gives consent," and she had raised her lovely eyes to meet his smile, and had not forbidden him.

When a proud girl like Ethel had given such an

assurance of her love as that, it was bitter, it was crushing to be left alone, deserted, humiliated, in the midst of her other trials.

Yet, John Garwell had not once been to see her in those four weeks!

The suspicion was slow to force itself into her mind that it was her father's wealth which had charmed—not herself. But it came by degrees, and grew there.

She had heard stories against young Garwell—that he was wild—a flirt—that he had no true respect for women—that he gambled, and the like; but she had considered them the slanders of the envious. To her he had been refined, gallant, reverential, all that was admirable. It took the whole of that weary month to convince her that the change in her fortunes had changed her lover.

She and Myra were sitting up-stairs in her own room the evening after Myra had sent that surreptitious note.

They were not talking; somehow, they were not good company for one another in those days. Ethel was gazing listlessly into the open fire; Myra was turning the leaves of a novel.

A servant knocking, entered with a card, which he handed to Myra—thus quickly does the straw show the course of the current:

"Mr. Garwell asks if he can see the ladies a few moments."

Myra glanced sharply at her cousin, who raised her heavy eyes to the man's face.

"Did Mr. Garwell ask for both of us, Gerald?" inquired Myra.

"I understood him to say 'the ladies,' Miss Myra."

"Tell him we will be down presently."

The servant went out and a moment's dead silence ensued.

"Go down, Ethel. It is you he has come to see, of course."

Something in the soft voice jarred on the hearer's sensitiveness.

"Perhaps it is, Myra," she replied, haughtily; "but I must be excused from receiving any one yet. Pray make my excuses to Mr. Garwell."

Myra dropped her eyes to conceal the sudden blaze of light in them. This was what she had planned for! She had long been desperately in love with the man who waited in the drawing-room below; and if Ethel chose to be angry, and break with him, it opened to her the golden door of opportunity.

"Indeed, cousin, you might see Mr. Garwell. He will be disappointed."

"I must consult my own feelings, not his, Myra."

"Then, if I must go down, what shall I tell him from you?"

"That I am unable to see my friends at present."

With her hands pressed tightly together Ethel returned to her study of the fire. Soft little Myra fluttered up to the glass—her companion's back was turned—to take a look at herself. She was as fair as a lily-of-the-valley, in that black dress.

"Good-by, cousin. I'll send him away soon. I don't fancy leaving you alone."

"Never mind me," answered Ethel, kindly. She did not understand that cousin, long as she had lived with her.

Mr. Garwell was standing in front of his chair in the drawing-room, undecided as to how he should greet Ethel. He wanted to be kind, but not too kind, for he intended she should understand that the past was blotted out. But the person who glided in and came up to him was not Ethel.

"Ah! Miss Myra, I hope I see you well. I trust I have not taken too great a liberty in responding to your note. Pray, why do you think Miss Ethel misses my visits? I dare say you understand that we are friends—friends only?"

"Is that so?" asked Myra, looking quickly up at him. "I imagined you and my cousin were engaged."

"What an idea! Should be only too proud and happy, I am sure—only, as all my friends know, I am not a marrying man. Miss Ethel Wainwright is a glorious girl—glorious! I dare say she never did me the honor to think of me in that light."

"It was only an impression of mine; Ethel never said so," and she cast down her large eyelids and sighed.

This gave the visitor an opportunity to study her. This insignificant little cousin, whom he had often anathematized for being in the way, had assumed a new position.

She was the heiress now!

"I never remarked how pretty she was," thought John. "What an exquisite complexion, and what long eyelashes! A perfect little cat, I know—the kind of a girl I detest—but quite worth keeping as a friend, in case my madcap Coralie proves incorrigible. Two strings to my bow are none too many, when I consider how heavily I lost yesterday. Coralie's a thousand times more to my taste; and this property may be locked up in a lawsuit. I heard something about Mr. Dobell's being anxious to break the will. Still, as I say, two strings are not too many."

Then aloud:

"Miss Myra, if I ever did think of marriage, your cousin is too good for me. I should want a woman with a spice of wickedness in her composition. You have a grain of perverseness running through your nature, haven't you?"

The subtle smile on Myra's face answered him.

In her heart she despised his want of fidelity, yet she loved him, in her way, and was glad to be noticed and praised by him, on any terms.

"He is false, and he is after money," she thought. "No matter, I would like to become Mrs. John Garwell."



"I hope I am not keeping you from your cousin, Miss Myra?"

"Oh, no; Ethel prefers solitude. For my part, I am weary of it."

"Then I may stay a little while?"

"Certainly, if you will. I have been so lonely, and so sad, and so dreadfully anxious about poor, poor Ethel. I'm so sorry things have turned out as they have, although I am the gainer, Mr. Garwell."

But we will leave these two to the enjoyment of their mutual deceptions, and return to Ethel.

The bell had rung a second time, shortly after Mr. Garwell's arrival; and this time Ethel had been summoned and had gone down to the library to meet Mr. Dobell.

The lawyer had been to see her several times, to beg of her to allow him to contest the will, when the time came to do it; but she had always refused. This was his errand now.

"I beg of you not to worry me about money matters, Mr. Dobell—at least, not yet. I thank you for the interest you take in me; but I can't bring myself to take half as much interest in myself. My cousin enjoys being mistress here; let her alone, I say. I can never take comfort again in the property. Let her have it."

"Your cousin seems to be extraordinarily selfish. It makes my blood boil to see how things go in this house."

Ethel smiled bitterly.

"Myra has talent enough to take care of her rights. I don't blame her for that. She is a soft little creature."

"So is a snake," added the lawyer.

"I shall never contest the will, Mr. Dobell."

"Then you do a great injustice to the dead, my dear young lady. You frustrate the evident intentions of Mr. Wainwright."

"I can't help it," cried Ethel, piteously. "If you take such a friendly interest in me, dear, Mr. Dobell, prove it by trying to find out for me what and who I am; then, indeed, you will do me a service for which I shall be grateful."

"I wish I could help you there, Miss Ethel."

"Perhaps you can."

"But I have nothing to work upon. Even a hound must have the scent, and an Indian must have the trail."

"There was the visit of that woman," remarked Ethel, thoughtfully.

"Yes; but she vanished without a trace. Perhaps you can tell me something about her which will give me the clew?"

"I am afraid not. She came and went—that is all."

"Did she appear like an American woman?"

"No; she was dark and foreign-looking. Spanish, perhaps."

"Your father spent several years in the West Indies when he was a young man. Of course you know that he married there, lost his wife shortly after that—that is, within two or three years—and returning, a widower, to his native city, brought you with him as his own little daughter."

"Yes, I know. Papa took the death of his wife so much to heart that he never could endure questioning about her—my mother, as I then supposed."

"He was understood at the time, to have made a very brilliant choice—the beautiful daughter of a wealthy planter, a Cuban belle, whose diamonds and whose personal charms were both said to be dazzling. Surely he must have preserved some records of his brief married life—a portrait, a name, a diary. Have you searched the private drawers of this secretary, Miss Ethel?"

"I could not bring myself to the task, Mr. Dobell. But here are the keys; will you do it for me?"

A minute search into every nook and crevice of the secretary revealed nothing bearing on the subject of such interest to them. A little pair of pink slippers, which Ethel remembered to have been her own, set her to sobbing over them, for they told that this dead gentleman, whom she had worshiped as one of the fondest of fathers, at least loved her, even if he had disowned her. While she wept over the tiny shoes, the lawyer sat with his head on his hand, lost in thought.

"Miss Ethel," he said at last, "I am unwilling, for three reasons, to let this matter rest here: first, for the regard I had for Mr. Wainwright; second, for the interest I take in you; third, because, as a lawyer, my professional pride is aroused. I will tell you what I will do. I had planned to spend a few weeks in Florida; the latter part of this coming winter. Instead of going to Florida I will visit Cuba; the climate will be just as beneficial to me, and I can spend my leisure time in the attempt to unravel this mystery. If I knew the maiden-name of the lady whom Mr. Wainwright married, I could soon find out all the rest."

"Why should you take all this trouble?" asked Ethel, sadly.

"Because I like to have an interesting case on my hands," responded the lawyer, laughing. "I would like to serve you, dear Miss Ethel, gratify my own feelings, and—disappoint some other people."

"Who is it you would like to disappoint, Mr. Dobell?" asked a soft voice at the door.

In spite of his great self-command the lawyer started. He had closed the door on entering, and he had not heard it open; but at these words, as he looked around, there stood Myra, boldly confronting him, with those large, childlike eyes unblinking at his angry frown.

Mr. Garwell had taken his departure, after a most agreeable call; and his entertainer had, upon catching the sound of voices in the library, stolen thither with that velvet step of hers, listened a few moments, and then quietly pushed open the door, in time to ask this pertinent question of the embarrassed attorney.

Mr. Dobell's embarrassment did not last long; he was too vexed; and as he arose to take his hat, he answered deliberately, looking square in the blue eyes:

"You, Miss Myra. I cannot feel reconciled to this young lady's present position; and all my skill and experience are at her service, if she can only be persuaded to make a struggle for her rights."

"Well, I am not without the advice of a lawyer, any more than my cousin; and I think the 'skill and experience' of the one I have engaged at least equal to yours," said Myra, defiantly.

Mr. Dobell bowed to his fair client and left the house without any reply to the heiress's taunt.

## CHAPTER V.

### BETWEEN TWO HEARTS.

THE handsome patient in the hospital recovered rapidly. The two ribs which had been broken behaved splendidly, for a fractured bone is not much to youth and health; Nature sets to work so kindly to help such. At first it was supposed that the left lung was contused; and it was this fear which had given the case so grave a look; but when it proved to be happily uninjured, all Bertram Leigh had to do, as the surgeon told him, was to lie still a few days.

As soon as the fever attending the injury passed away, he was allowed to partake freely of the luxuries which the pair of dove-colored ladies brought him every day. The most of these, it must be said, went to others worse off than himself; our young cadet was not the man to pamper himself, when all about him were others who suffered more. The old ladies softly scolded him when they found where their baskets of pears and pines and grapes, wines, jellies and birds, went; and the next time they came they brought fourfold enough for the whole ward, thus making the young man very happy.

"Thee has a good heart, Bertram Leigh," said Miss Priscilla to him, that day.

Then the boy's eyes shone with redoubled splendor. To be praised by Coralie's relative—that was exquisite joy!

Miss Charity, too, had taken a great fancy to him. Something in his youth, his helplessness, his beauty, and his grateful, graceful ways, touched her deeply. She felt as if she could almost adopt the boy.

But there was Coralie!

No adoption of handsome youths could be thought of while that impulsive maiden was under their charge.

To tell the truth, neither of the gentle Quaker ladies would have been half so kind to the person who had saved their darling—would have noticed him at all—would have done anything but recoil from him in horror—had she suspected the part he was playing with her niece.

It was Coralie's apparent indifference—ingratitude, indeed—which urged her aunts to be more demonstrative.

"She don't seem to think saving her life much of a feat. So thoughtless is youth!" Miss Charity had observed.

"She has never asked us the second time to take her to the hospital," averred Miss Priscilla.

They were doomed to have their eyes opened very wide upon the wickedness and deceitfulness of their niece's ways.

The surgeon at the hospital who attended on the cadet noticed that Miss Coralie's visits were made alone; and being acquainted with her relative, he considered it his duty to hint to them that the most desperate kind of a flirtation was going on between his patient and their niece.

Oh, horrible! Oh, incredible!

That afternoon, when the pretty culprit came tripping down Madame B.'s white marble door-steps, all unconscious of the fate in store for her, cheeks and eyes glowing with anticipation of the stolen sweets of that visit she was about to make, there stood the family carriage, with George like a statue in ebony on the high driver's seat, and her two aunts, pale, solemn and mysterious, awaiting her.

"Are you going for a drive? Dear aunts, I'd rather walk. Mayn't I walk home this pleasant afternoon?"

"Thee may take thy place here, in front of us, Coralie Clyde," answered Miss Priscilla, sternly, to this cunning plea.

Then all the sweet color flew down from Coralie's cheeks; she knew, in a moment, that her dreadful sin had come to light. Very meekly she stepped into the carriage and sat down facing those severe brows bent on her in holy horror.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"

mur-mured Miss Charity, as George started the team into a decorous trot.

Miss Priscilla made no remark; she said never another word, so awful were her grief and displeasure, until they were at home and in the house.

There, in the hall, she turned upon the offender:

"Coralie Clyde, thee is a chip of the old block. Go to thy room and remain there. It is hard to punish our sister's child, but the doctrines of love are not sufficient for thy restraint. Thee must be punished."

Coralie did not even ask to have her offense named. She was no hypocrite, usually, despite of the wrong steps she had taken in concealing her visits to the hospital. Neither did she attempt to "brazen out" her guilt. She felt that she had been a very bad girl. So she went slowly up-stairs, followed by her aunt Priscilla, whom she expected would enter her room with her and deliver a lecture on her heinous conduct.

But, her aunt did not enter; she stopped outside, and turned the key upon her wicked niece.

"Better that than be lectured," thought the prisoner. "Oh, my poor, poor Bertram! How lonely you will be this afternoon! How you will fret because I do not come! Perhaps they have fallen on him, and withered him under their displeasure! I wish I knew!"

She sat by the window and looked into the street, and thought and sighed, and grew passionate only to make all manner of picts, plans and resolves.

After a long, long period she heard the tea-bell ring. Would they send for her to come down to supper?

Presently some one unlocked the door. She had a glimpse of aunt Charity; something was pushed into the room, then the door was closed and re-locked.

Coralie was frightfully hungry, despite her forlorn mood, and went quite eagerly to the tray for her supper.

The tray contained—a glass of water, a thick slice of bread. She returned to the window.

"I'm not a baby," she said, scornfully. "They forgot that. I love him!—love him, with all my heart and soul. It is too late to prevent that. They can't starve that out of me. Poor, foolish aunts! You smile on that scoundrel, John Garwell; and you lock me up for falling in love with the purest, the best, the most beautiful, brave boy that ever lived! Well, keep me on bread-and-water; I'll love him every minute you do it!"

"I've got nothing to do but think of you, dear Bertram," she murmured, looking up at the stars, which were beginning to come out in the dark-blue sky, as if her hero was perched on one of them.

What a glamour there is over "love's young dream!"—what a mystery in the processes of its infatuation! What are life-long friends and their wishes, weighed in the balance with one known to the lover, but for a few brief days?—feathers against gold!

Coralie had been an affectionate, fond child to the two sisters sitting in solemn grief in the room below. But millions of devoted aunts could never convince her that she did not know what was best for her own happiness—that Bertram Leigh was not an angel, with the glitter of Paradise still in his eyes—that she was not in love for the first as well as the only time—that she could ever change, or Bertram could ever change.

And with Coralie love was a powerful, a dangerous passion. Those qualities of hers—reckless generosity, impulsive tenderness, sublime trust in others, willfulness and pride—all went to make her love, when she gave it, the offering of her entire heart's treasury.

After she had wearied herself with talking to Bertram, through the medium of the stars, she went to bed and slept soundly.

But, on the next day came a battle, out of which she came victorious but exhausted. Her aunt Priscilla had tried to make the condition of her forgiveness for what had been done depend on a promise that her niece would never see or speak with the cadet again.

"I never will promise you that, aunt Priscilla, if you shut me up in the chamber until I am as old as you are. I can't promise you! How can I, when I have given him my sacred word that I will marry him some day when he is ready?"

The struggle lasted a couple of hours; then the elder lady retired, defeated, but carrying the key with her, leaving Coralie still a prisoner.

A week went on, after that. Coralie nibbled as much bread and sipped as much water as kept the breath of life in her; she grew pale, not so much from the confinement to her room as from anxiety about Bertram—what he would think of her desertion—and more resolute in mind as she grew weaker in body.

On the eighth day, as she sat at her window, some one passed on the other side and looked up. Coralie gave a cry of joy. Bertram was well—was out of the hospital—was walking by, in hopes of communicating with her!

She threw up the sash, leaned out and bowed to him. He gave her a slight return, and hurried on. He was very pale; he did not smile; he appeared angry with her.

"Some one has told him falsehoods about me," she thought, and she drew back quickly, the red dying out which had flamed into her cheeks at sight of him.

She remained all that evening at her window watching, hoping, listening for some signal which should invite her to communicate with her lover.

None came; and she went to bed sick at heart.

The following day, about noon, aunt Priscilla unlocked her door.

"Thee can come down," she said, stiffly.

Coralie freshened up her toilet and went down. Miss Charity slyly wiped away a tear when she saw how thin the girl had grown—how pale and quiet she was.

Priscilla purposely pushed a morning's paper before her.

Coralie took it up and glanced indifferently over it, until her eyes fell on a paragraph which fixed them:

"The U. S. Government steamer, Mohawk, has been unexpectedly ordered to South America. She sails at noon to-day."

The Mohawk was Bertram's ship!

Coralie gave a little gasp, the paper slipped out of her hand; and presently she, too, slipped down upon the floor.

Starvation and bitter disappointment were too much for her.



The maiden aunts were much alarmed—the conscience of one of them accused her of the darkest deed of her dove-colored life—of an interview which she had held with the young cadet, in the hospital, the day after her discovery of Coralie's wickedness. In that interview, sought by herself and kept secret even from Charity, Priscilla Featherflight had assured the unhappy young man that her niece was "as good as engaged" to a wealthy gentleman in every way worthy of her—a friend of the family—and that the child now bitterly regretted her heedlessness in becoming entangled with him.

Priscilla thought of this double-dealing, as, with her sister's aid, she lifted Coralie and laid her on the sofa.

"What was to be done?"

Neither of these ladies in all their long lives had fainted from disappointment in love, or any other cause.

Charity suggested burnt feathers and camphor; Priscilla opened the girl's dress to cut her corset-strings, forgetting that her niece's pretty figure had never been molded in such an article. Something tumbled out of the fair bosom onto the sofa—a picture—his picture, for shame! but the finder could not pause to tear it up just then; she slipped it in her pocket and called one of the servants to bring her a few feathers. Charity, in her excitement, had just struck a match to set fire to the end of a fine bunch of peacock plumes, used as a duster, when Coralie opened her dark eyes and made an effort to sit up.

"Thank the Lord! we hav'n't entirely killed her," sniffled Charity.

"Nor burned up my best duster," added Priscilla.

From that hour nothing could exceed the kindness of her aunts. They could afford to be indulgent, now that the only object for which she pined was out of the way.

They bought her new dresses; they presented her with a string of pearls, in spite of their Quaker abhorrence of ornament; they took her to drive every day; they allowed her to visit the opera with some young friends; they consulted her taste in the daily bill of fare. In spite of all, they uneasily felt that she was not happy. Day by day she changed; she was paler, more quiet, more loving and sweet—not herself. Not the wild Coralie who had "kept them in hot water" half their time, but a sort of shadow of her former gay self.

They began to realize that it was not so easy to cure a case of love-sickness.

But, what did they thought best to heal the hurt. They brought her another lover, of whom they approved—John Garwell, who came and came. There is no devotion so faithful as that of a lover who is beset by duns, and sees in his lady-love's hand the key to bonds and checks and cash-boxes. Coralie's little dimpled hand was the fairy-gift that was to unlock a fortune to him who had already spent one. No wonder he became most impressive in his avowals!

Coralie no longer had the spirit to check and tease him. Once and awhile she would flash out at him a bolt of her girlish scorn; but, usually, she was gentle and impassive.

And so, long before Christmas, it became understood in the circle they frequented that Miss Clyde and Mr. Garwell were "engaged."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FACE UNDER THE HOOD.

"EVELYN, I wish you would take this note from me over to Walnut street," said Mr. Dobell to his clerk and student. "Be sure you leave it in no hand but that of Miss Ethel Wainwright. Particularly not with Miss Myra. I mean nothing by such a precaution, of course, but we lawyers learn to be suspicious."

"I will take it, sir," answered the clerk, with apparent indifference. The back of the older lawyer was turned, so that he did not notice the swift flush which rose to the face of the young man, or the light which kindled in his steel-blue eyes.

The hand trembled which reached out for the letter.

"I will insist on seeing the young lady to whom it is addressed," he continued: and Mr. Dobell, shrewd as he was, never guessed at the keen pleasure he had bestowed on his student, by making him the bearer of the note.

Webster Evelyn was an old young man to be still reading law; twenty-five, if he was a day. He had never been one of those favored sons whose rich fathers pay their way through college; but had been obliged to teach and earn money in many other hard ways, before he could take a Harvard course; and after he had graduated he had to stop again to get the means wherewith to clothe himself and keep up a decent if plain appearance in the lawyer's office. His board he earned from the first by copying. He had talent, will, energy, everything but money, and he expected to have plenty of that before he was thirty-five, for he was ambitious, and looked forward to an income of twenty thousand dollars a year, such as his tutor enjoyed.

"The top of the heap" in that profession, was the place he aspired to; not because he was vain or bold, but because the fire of aspiration burned unquenchably in his brain. Mr. Dobell considered him a rising young man, and took him more than any one else into his confidence.

This was not the first time he had been sent to the Wainwright mansion on business. Before the death of the head of the house he had gone there occasionally for Mr. Dobell. During the first of these visits, Ethel Wainwright—not knowing that her father was

engaged with a stranger—walked into his library, a song on her lips, roses in her hands, dressed in a sweeping robe of delicate-hued silk:

The diamonds in her dusky hair  
Seemed only dew-drops from the rose,  
The sweet white rose, that nestled there;  
And o'er the emerald gown, that sheathed  
The fairest lily ever breathed,  
They sparkled like the summer rain.  
He knew her haughtiest of her race,  
As she was loveliest in the face;  
But neither cruel, cold, nor vain.

Then, for the first time, dawned on the eyes of the poor young man (whose day-dreams were so much more sumptuous than the hard reality) the embodiment of that ideal picture which fancy had painted years ago—the face, the figure, the eyes, the voice of the one woman whom he believed to be somewhere in the wide world for him to find and love.

Now that he had found her, it was as if she stood on some far planet of her own, brighter than ours. This proud, fair lady in her silks and diamonds, was not for him!

None the less he felt that she was the complement of himself—the one mate who would round his life into a happy completion.

He felt that he could make himself worthy of her, for he was pure of heart and morals, and that his nature had all the refinement of hers, if not the same freedom of development.

But he had not a hope. Mr. Wainwright was known to be a gentleman, arrogant and inaccessible. Was it likely that he would smile upon a poor lawyer's clerk, in love with his glorious child?

To still further crush into blackest night hope's glowing torch, the second time Evelyn went to the house, as he stood in the hall, waiting to be sent for to the library, Ethel came out from the drawing-room, dressed for a matinee, leaning on the arm of John Garwell, and smiling up into his face with those sweet, fond eyes which mirrored her girlish love. He would have died for a look like that; but his portion was a slight, unrecognizing bow as she glided by him, thrilling him dumb with the touch of her perfumed dress as it swept his foot in passing him.

When Webster Evelyn heard the news of Ethel's troubles—that she was disowned, disinherited—an orphan who did not even know her parentage—a fierce joy, a dizzy triumph seized heart and brain. Oh! if he could win her—give her a home—work, like a good fellow, to surround her with such luxuries as ought to be hers! What a pleasure that would be!

But the sickness of despair followed swiftly on the thrill of hope. Ethel, no matter how ill-fortune attended her, would still be a queen, still have her choice from the best and noblest. To Ethel he was still a lawyer's errand-boy!

Then the story of Mr. Garwell's base desertion and of her cousin's selfishness came to him through the lawyer's confidence.

And then, that purpose of Mr. Dobell's to search for some light on the mystery of Ethel's birth—some excuse to break that unjust will—was confided to him.

This was the work which he longed to do.

It was nearly Christmas, that day, when he took Mr. Dobell's letter to Ethel. He was to see her and to bring back an answer. No wonder he had flushed at the prospect—that his heart beat under his threadbare coat when he inquired at the door if Miss Ethel would see him for a few moments, by request of Mr. Dobell. The servant showed him into the library and went to deliver his message. Presently the light fall of a foot in the hall made his pulse roar in his ears. The door opened, but it was not Ethel who came. The little cousin entered, smiled sweetly at him, as he bowed, and said in a soft voice:

"Did you bring a letter from Mr. Dobell? Very well; you may leave it with me. My cousin Ethel is lying down just now; we do not care to disturb her."

"Do not disturb her, I pray. I can wait. I am in no great haste. But I must deliver this in person to her, since I am to hear what her answer is. Mr. Dobell's instructions were to confer with Miss Ethel Wainwright, and bring back to him her decision on a point of her business affairs."

Myra, while he was making this speech in a slightly embarrassed manner, watched him observantly from under the shadow of her half-drooped eyelashes.

"Oh, very well; I suppose my cousin must be awakened. I will tell her her lawyer has sent a person here to see her," and the new heiress walked out, without so much as asking "the person" to be seated.

So Evelyn was standing near the table, waiting patiently, when Ethel glided in. He started—he could not help it—to see her so pale, with such dark shadows under her eyes; so listless and dull, who was once so radiant with spirit.

His love, his longing, his fears for her, were all in his gaze; but she perceived nothing of it; to her, also, he was only "a person" who had brought her a note.

"I am to wait for an answer," he said.

Ethel motioned with her jeweled hand to a chair, broke the seal of the message and read it. It was to the effect that her lawyer, deeply as he was interested in her affairs, had about made up his mind that it was going to be impossible for him to go to Cuba, at least before spring.

A famous case on which he was employed, and which he had expected to be settled in November, was held over to the February term. He would abandon it willingly, were it not that such a course

would injure his client. He was much disappointed to be obliged to put her interests aside for a time—only a time—and a ked her which he had better do—attend to her case or delay it?

"Delay it, of course," said the young lady, promptly. "It is only a wild idea of Mr. Dobell's that there is anything to be done for me," she added, with a sweet, mournful smile. "An idea prompted by his interest in me. I never encouraged him in his project of visiting Cuba on my behalf. I am glad he has abandoned it."

"Not abandoned—deferred, Miss Wainwright."

She looked up at him, for there was a certain quiet power in his voice which arrested her attention.

"Do you know anything about it?" she asked.

"All that Mr. Dobell does. I am his confidential secretary. Miss Wainwright, there is nothing to prevent my going to Cuba; and I believe I can be as persevering, at least, as Mr. Dobell."

Again she looked straight into his steel-blue honest eyes.

"Thank you, Mr.—"

"Evelyn."

"Mr. Evelyn; but it would be foolish for any one to go. I will write a few words to that effect, and you can hand them to Mr. Dobell. I have made up my mind what to do. I shall take my \$10,000 to some country village where I can live cheaply on the interest of it. Since—since Mr. Wainwright was not really my father, I am more than willing that his brother's child should have his estate. I wish you would convince my good friend of this," she added, with one of her old smiles. "He don't half believe me, when I say it," and then she began to write her note.

Evelyn watched her in a sort of rapture, as her silver-white hand slid over the paper, on which her eyes were fixed, so that he had opportunity to admire the poise of her graceful head, the length of her dark eyelashes, the outlines of her deliciously-rounded, supple, slender figure.

Too much of his passionate regard burned in his eyes; she looked suddenly up, and blushed under his gaze—

"Suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed."

But the blush was followed by an expression so severe upon a brow so lovely that the lover was chilled to the heart.

When she had folded and sealed her note, she handed it to him without a word; and he, having no excuse for lingering, bowed stiffly and went out from that glorious presence, not knowing when—if ever—he should be in it again; yet, with the self-abnegation of true love, fully determined to sacrifice time and his own prospects to her fortunes.

"I will do for her what she will not and cannot do for herself," he said to himself, as he went down the steps.

The days were at their shortest, so that it was almost dark as he left the house, though only half-past four of a December afternoon. The wind was blowing keenly from out a mass of silver-edged black cloud, which he could see at the end of the long street; there was a pink flush above the cloud in the clear sky; the slender mast of a vessel showed where the river ran, not yet frozen over—that lovely river which bounded Fairmount Park, not the one which lay on the eastern side, thick-set along its wharves with a "forest of masts."

As he descended the steps, looking about him, after a careful habit he had, two things attracted his attention besides the bitter wind and the wintry sky. The first was a beggar-woman sitting on the lower step, her thick shawl drawn about her, her knees gathered up to her chin. She raised a pair of sharp black eyes to the young man's face, and held out a brown, wrinkled hand.

John Garwell would have ordered her off the Wainwright steps with an oath; Webster Evelyn unbuttoned his frayed, two-winters'-old overcoat and took out two or three pieces of silver from his pocket; he did not believe in the begging system, but this was a woman, not young and the wind cut like a knife; and he dropped the coins in the supplicating hand.

At the same moment some one went by, another woman, wrapped in a long, belted waterproof, and wearing an old-fashioned quilted hood. She turned her head to see the young gentleman placing money in the beggar's hand, and Evelyn caught sight of the brightest pair of eyes he had ever seen, but with a frightened look in them which attracted his particular attention, and made him notice a face very sweet and young, but pale; and a small hand daintily gloved, clutching at the small bundle which she carried.

The hood and cloak were at variance with the face; he noticed the shape of rings under her glove and that her dress was of rich silk where it showed when the wind fluttered the hem of the waterproof overgarment.

Her youth, her troubled look, her bundle, made an impression on one whose imagination had been fired by being in the presence of the beautiful woman whom he loved; he looked at her a second time, went on a few steps in his own way, the opposite of hers; then turned and followed her.

The strange idea came suddenly, strongly into his mind that she was seeking the river for the purpose of destroying that young life.

She walked rapidly, so that he had enough to do to keep his place a couple of rods behind her. When she came to the bridge leading over to West Philadelphia, not far from the new Medical College, she stopped there a moment, and Evelyn came closer to her, afraid that she would throw herself into the water, and also as a protection to her from some rough-looking fellows who were hanging about. She



saw him and recognized him as the one who had given money to the beggar, and grew terrified.

"Do not follow me," she said, in a low voice. "Indeed, I am only going to my relatives. What do you follow me for?" and she looked about for a policeman.

Evelyn felt a little embarrassed at this plea. He had thought her in danger of suicide, but if he told her so he would make himself appear ridiculous.

"I thought you seemed in trouble; and I was afraid these men might annoy you. I will not speak to you, but I will, with your permission, constitute myself your footman, at least until you are over the bridge."

"Indeed, I am not afraid—except of you. I shall take the street-car on the other side."

Evelyn fell back, but continued to follow the girl, at a little distance, until she had done as she said she was going to do—enter a car. Then, feeling as if he had been tilting at some imaginary windmill, and finding himself far out of his path to the office, he concluded to go to Mr. Dobell's house—where he had a standing invitation to dinner—and improve the opportunity to talk quietly with the lawyer about a plan which had suggested itself to him.

All the way there he kept a vivid picture in his mind of the beautiful, wild face he had seen under the hood.

"That child—for she is not much more than a child—is running into trouble of some sort, I'm certain," he mused.

#### CHAPTER VII.

##### FORTUNE-TELLING.

MEANTIME the beggar to whom he had given alms with a recommendation to seek some place of shelter immediately, seemed in no hurry to get out of the cold and coming darkness; she continued to sit where she was, pretty thoroughly protected by her thick shawl, drawn over head and ears, until the lamplighter set the gas to blazing in a lamp in front of her; then she arose and crawled up to the door, ringing the bell.

"Why don't you go to the basement door?" asked the servant, sharply, on seeing only an old beggar-woman before him.

"Because I have business with your new mistress," she answered, quite unawed by his dignity.

"My new mistress?" he queried, puzzling himself to make out her meaning.

"Yes; with Miss Myra Wainwright. She is mistress here, now, is she not? Tell her that a person who knows how to tell fortunes wants to tell hers."

"I don't think she'll take up with such foolishness, old woman. Come in; but I shan't leave you a-standing here, when I don't know what you may be after. Tummas! Here, Tummas, you boy, stand 'ere an' watch the old witch, while I tells our young lady as she presents her compliments an' would request the pleasure of a say-ance with her."

The woman's keen black eyes flashed a look after the footman; then turning to the boy she remarked, with a grim smile:

"Ay, watch me close, little one; I might carry off one of these statues, or the newel-post, if you don't have a care!"

But, the footman did not have to leave Buttons long in charge; 'the new mistress' was flitting down the stairs to sit a little while in the drawing-room before dinner.

The keen, searching eyes of the woman were fixed upon her as she floated down—small, airy, graceful. In the house Myra did not think it necessary to wear heavy mourning. She was expecting Mr. Garwell that evening, and she had made herself as pretty as possible, by dressing in white, with only black ribbons and jewelry to show that she was in mourning.

Her fair skin and flaxen hair were set off to their best advantage by this dress. She looked more like a child than a girl of twenty-two, as she came flitting down with a fairy motion, almost as if she had wings.

She stopped at the foot of the stairs and looked inquiringly from the servant to the intruder. Not for an instant did the piercing eyes of the stranger leave her face.

"I beg your pardoning, miss," said the man, "she would come in. She says she wants to tell your fortune, miss, an' I was coming to see you about it."

"You'd better take her down to Norah and Peggy, Bribes."

"No, my lady, it is *you* that I have come to tell a fine fortune to," spoke up the woman, advancing quite near to the young lady. "I'm a Cuban lady, and I'm said to have a gift. I can tell many things in the future; I never fail."

Now Myra was not without a spice of superstition in her nature. She was secretly much troubled, also, with doubts whether the wonderful good fortune that had come to her would stay; she dwelt much, mentally, on her cousin's probable endeavors to break the will; she wanted to know, too, what her chances were with John Garwell; she was idle, and reflected that she might amuse herself until dinner with this old hag. Ethel was in her own room; she could have an interview with the fortune-teller without being ridiculed by any one; so she finally said:

"Well, come in here with me. Let me see, now, how much you know about the future," and half-laughing, she led the way into a charming boudoir beyond the two drawing-rooms.

The stranger closed the door and Myra seated herself in a blue-satin-and-gilt chair, in an indolent attitude.

"Describe my future husband, please," she said, pertly.

"He is tall, slender, dark—brown hair, gray eyes—a little under thirty years old. He has a scar on his left hand made by the bite of a horse; he is fond of horses," the woman went on, slowly, holding the tiny hand of the girl, with palm open to her inspection.

"You have seen him!" cried Myra, blushing brightly.

"Yes," said the stranger, now holding Myra's hand firmly in her strong clasp. "I have seen John Garwell. I did not come here to practice upon you the trickeries of a Gipsy. I came to you, Myra Wainwright, because I'm the possessor of a secret which you would almost give this hand to know. Can any one hear us?" looking about her.

"No, I think not. My cousin is up-stairs—the servants at their dinner. We can speak low," answered Myra, speaking eagerly.

With natural quickness she had connected the assertion of the woman that she was a Cuban with some secret which should bear upon the mystery of Ethel's birth. What could this dark, poor-looking creature tell her? Was she in danger of losing all? Was she to be confirmed in her possessions? Cool as the young lady was by habit, she felt her color come and go—her heart throb loudly against her side.

"I can assure you that which you have already; and I can fix your title to money and estates in Cuba which will more than double your present wealth."

"How?" asked Myra, under her breath.

"That is my secret. It is a secret, for which you will have to pay me well—well, liberally, extravagantly! But then you will be able to pay me well. All I ask is a thousand dollars now, and one-tenth—reflect, what a trifle, one tenth!—of the property which I shall make it in your power to claim."

"That might prove to be a large sum!"

"Ay, but your portion will be nine times larger! Let me tell you first, Myra Wainwright, that I have come to you *first*, for a reason of my own; but that, if I am dissatisfied with you or your liberality, there remains your cousin Ethel, with whom I can treat."

"But you cannot give her what is *mine*!"

"Ay, *is it yours*? Do no doubts trouble you? Are there none to labor in your cousin's cause?"

"I am not gainsaying you," asserted Myra, beginning to tremble. "I am willing to accept your terms, as soon as you *prove* to me your right to make them."

The woman again glanced about the room, went to the two doors—each of which closed behind soft blue draperies so as to appear part of the wall—dropped off her ugly shawl and stood before the heiress looking quite another person from the hag she had chosen to represent. Her gray hair was gone, with a damp handkerchief she wiped the wrinkles from her cheeks, and showed a face which once must have been splendidly striking, with its rich brown skin, its straight brows and its fine dark eyes. Her hair was black, thick and long—beautiful still, though its owner must have been nearly forty. She wore large gold earrings and a broad gold necklace.

Altogether there was an air of power about her—not as if she had ever belonged to a high class; but as if energy and ambition of spirit had raised her above the station in which she was born. Myra thought her a person to be feared as well as admired.

"When I have said to you what I have to say, you can judge how far to trust me, young lady—whether I can do you a service, and if you desire me to do you that service. You are ambitious," she remarked, suddenly fixing on the girl her powerful gaze; "I think you like the first place—money, independence—to be your own mistress and to dictate to others. This awaits you—you have only to reach out and take every thing. You can be a queen. But I must have my reward for serving you. I want money; I, too, have my ambition."

"You shall have plenty of money," murmured Myra, whose cheeks were red and whose eyes on fire at these alluring promises.

"You must swear to betray nothing until I give you leave."

"I swear, now and here, by my own soul, to betray nothing."

"Then I am ready to breathe a story into your ears to which no one in this broad world has the key but myself. One other person knows a part of this story—thinks she knows all—but is deceived. It is *your interest* to keep secret what I tell you; so I have no fear in making you my confederate."

She drew a footstool in front of the fair heiress, knelt down on it, and a long conference followed.

"I have been having my fortune told," said Myra, gayly, as she went in to dinner an hour later, and found Ethel there alone, with the dessert before her. "What! have you dined? That is lucky, for I have no appetite."

"I could not find you," apologized her cousin.

"I was shut up in the boudoir with a Gipsy. These poor beggars take every way to get a dollar. She teased me so hard I had to humor her."

"I trust she predicted only fair weather," remarked Ethel, pleasantly.

"She continued to invest her nonsense with an air of truth," answered Myra. "I gave her a gold piece, my fortune was so bright. I'll take a bit of that iced *souffle*, Ethel, please;" but when she had the *souffle* before her Myra scarcely touched it; but waited for her coffee, which she took eagerly.

Ethel, grave and sad, as she always was since that loss which had come so suddenly upon her, noticed some subtle change in the expression of her companion's face.

"Myra is a giddy thing, for a girl of her age," she thought, seeing how the mere flattery of a pretended fortune-teller could bring such a rich color to the fair cheek and such a smile about the pink mouth, and glitter to the large blue eyes that almost seemed to wish to avoid her own because they knew they were too bright.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### MY LADY PATRONESS.

THAT first interview of Myra with the Cuban woman was not the last. Several more followed, not at the house, however; and then the Cuban left Philadelphia to return to her native island. Myra had drawn so liberally of money at the bank that every one wondered what she could do with it.

But the woman who took two thousand dollars in gold back to Cuba, could have answered that question better than any one else.

A new spirit pervaded the home of the Wainwrights. Myra developed a new character so rapidly that even those who suspected her latent qualities were astonished.

The meek, quiet, deprecating little creature became haughty and insolent. The old servants, who had been, some of them, years in the family, were given notice to leave. Others filled their places. Whereas, in the past, one waiting-maid had sufficed both girls, Myra now had a maid exclusively to attend upon her; and a hard time the girl had of it trying to please a mistress as capricious as she was unfeeling.

But this servant, for some reason, chose to remain with her. She was a young person who had presented herself in answer to an advertisement; a Frenchwoman, by birth, she was represented to be, in the reference which she brought, but speaking English quite well; bright and pleasant in her manners, neat in her dress, with a really pretty face laughing out from under her white cap. She was so tasteful in the arrangement of her young lady's hair, and could tell so much better than mademoiselle herself what became her most—giving a richness and tone to the flaxen hair and small features which they never before possessed—that Myra was anxious to keep her, while, at the same time, she made the girl a victim of numberless petty persecutions.

Though in mourning, and paying outward deference to her uncle's memory, Myra indulged in every pleasure allowable, and waited with burning impatience for the first six months of mourning to pass, so that she might be free to launch out into the full tide of gay society.

Every day her manner toward her cousin grew more indifferent and more patronizing. Ethel felt that insolent manner most keenly. She had lost father, lover, fortune, and now she had to bear this assumption of superiority on the part of this girl whom she had loved and cherished as a sister when Myra was penniless and friendless.

Ethel tried bravely to endure this daily torture, as she bore her other sufferings, silently and sadly.

But she felt a burning indignation which almost prompted her to leave the house forever when Myra, between Christmas and New Year's, changed the furniture of the mansion as she had changed the servants. The massive, but elegant and appropriate furniture, chosen by her uncle's taste, was sent to the auction-rooms, and, in its place, came sumptuous things, as if Myra had been the "Queen of France," for whom nothing was too luxurious.

Yet no one had the power to interfere.

The will had been admitted to probate—Ethel not contesting—and Myra being of age, there was no one with the right to check her extravagance. She acted as if the five hundred thousand dollars of her uncle's estate were five millions. No one, save herself, knew what the Cuban had revealed to her; or some clew might have been had to her senseless expenditure. Ethel looked on in indignation and dismay.

Everything prospered with little Myra. Everything which went to make up the sum of Ethel's trouble went to her aggrandizement. Yes! she had even won John Garwell to be her lover, before the first day of the New Year!

Circumstance, that "unspiritual God," had favored her in that desire of her heart, as in everything else.

For a terrible misfortune had overtaken that other house in Walnut street, of whose inmates we know something.

A few days before Christmas Coralie Clyde had kissed her aunts a laughing good-by for an hour, having been recommended to cease fumbling over the lace ruchings of her wedding-dress and to run out for a breath of air and a brisk walk.

Aunt Priscilla had seen with regret—and perhaps a tinge of remorse—that the smooth cheeks of her niece were growing less round and far more white, as the early day set for her marriage with the man of their choice approached.

The anxious aunt had sought to quiet her own conscience by a lavish expenditure of money on the coming event. Coralie had every pretty article purchased for her which she could be coaxed to say she admired. The old ladies had new dove-colored satins, of so solid a texture that they would "stand alone," in preparation, to be worn at the ceremony. There was a diadem of pearls in course of construction at Bailey's, which was to be worn on those wayward, dancing curls along with the bridal veil, and in unison with the lovely necklace which they had previously given her. Nothing was spared that would please their darling. Many gay things, not approved by the Friends, found their way into the sober, highly respectable dwelling.

But Coralie smiled less day by day; and she shrunk from the visits of the bridegroom-elect in a



strange way which kept her aunts more uneasy than they cared to confess.

And on this cold and blustering December day, when, seeing how white and still she was, they advised a brisk walk, she went very willingly to take it; and either some fearful accident happened to her or she forgot to come back.

Most people considered it a case of abduction or murder. She was almost a child in years, innocent, and perilously beautiful. Some wretch or wretches must have dogged her steps and snatched her ruthlessly away from her life of joy and beauty—from loving aunts and worshipping lover—from the bridal jewels and the bridal feast.

The whole city was startled.

The Misses Featherflight, mercifully for them, did not believe in their secret thoughts that Coralie had been abducted; but they allowed others to think they did.

Almost as dreadful, it seemed to them, was the thing they suspected—that she had run away to be married to that penniless and nameless youth to whom she had avowed she was "engaged." There was in such a course—they thought, in their pride—a more bitter disgrace than to meet her fate at the hands of ruffians.

Covertly they employed a detective, who ascertained for them that Bertram Leigh, cadet, had actually sailed in the *Mohawk*, as he had said he should do—that the ship was still far south on her coasting expedition—that young Leigh was still on board of her—had not left her except with others for a night or a day at some port—that, most certainly, Coralie had not gone to him.

After that, a horrible fear that something murderous had happened to the child, made the aunts wretched. The more so as time wore on, and they gained no tidings.

Many a time that winter did those poor old ladies go to view the dead and swollen body of some woman "found drowned"—some young creature who might lately have been as pretty and as innocent as Coralie. Their sorrow would have been most pitiful had they not brought it on their own heads by the effort they had made to sacrifice the girl on the wide altar of Mammon and Pride.

One man in the great city, when he read in the morning paper, the first day after, of the mysterious disappearance, firmly believed that he had seen the missing girl and followed her some distance on her way. This was Webster Evelyn, who had noticed the strange expression in the eyes of a young girl, and had followed her to the bridge.

"Fool that I was!" he said to himself, with a sinking of the heart, "to be duped into letting her go! It was all a ruse on her part, taking the car. Doubtless she returned to the river as soon as she could, unobserved, and threw herself in! I saw self-murder in her white face. I almost feel as if her death lays at my door."

Evelyn did, indeed, feel terribly agitated in recalling that perhaps if he had persisted in watching her, he might have saved a human life. But, it would do no good to brood over the unrecalled. He was to start at noon, on a steamer bound for Havana, and on which his passage was already taken, on his curious errand—like that of some medieval knight—of righting the wrongs of his fair lady.

Surely, his impulse and his purpose were as pure and gallant as those of any plumed knight who ever fought in a maiden's cause. Webster Evelyn might never have taken the fancy of a romantic girl, like one of those graceful heroes of the tournament, as he stepped out of Mr. Dobell's office, buttoning about his tall figure his frayed overcoat; but at heart he was the noblest of noble cavaliers.

He set out on his search with absolutely no clew to what he sought, except the fact that Cyrill Wainwright had married a Cuban lady, in such a year; and had returned on such another year, saying that he was a widower, and bringing with him a little girl of two years, who, he said, was his daughter, and always treated as such until the day of his death; but whom, in his will, he declared not to be his daughter, and so had disinherited her.

It had seemed strange to Mr. Dobell, when he first set out to make inquiries about Mr. Wainwright's early life, that in reality his most intimate friends knew so little on the subject. Everything had been taken for granted.

Cyrill Wainwright had been an only child; his father had been a highly-respected merchant of the city, and had sent his son, at the age of twenty-three, down to Cuba, to attend to some sugar interests which he had there.

Cyrill's nearest friends could only recall, when questioned, that his father had died while the son was in Cuba; that Cyrill was said to have married the daughter of a wealthy planter; that he had been called home on the death of his father, and had returned, in deep distress, having also lost his wife, not a month before; and that he brought with him his child, little Ethel; and had, from that time on, lived quietly in his Philadelphia home, devoted to his daughter, and the memory of his wife who had died in her youth, and for whose sake he had never again married. That when his brother failed in business, and afterward died, he invited his brother's daughter, Myra, to share his home, and be a companion for Ethel.

It was a suspicious point that, on questioning Ethel, she could not reveal her mother's family name, and that there was no record of it among Mr. Wainwright's papers.

Mr. Dobell had been forced to the conclusion that Ethel's appearance on the stage was due to some love affair in which the young merchant had become entangled with some one far below him in the social scale; that he might, indeed, have even misrepresented the real character of his alliance in order to bring

home this child as his own; but *why*, in that case, he should have brought the child and reared her as his daughter and heiress, puzzled the lawyer.

Of course, he had not betrayed his suspicions to Ethel.

It was this fact that Mr. Wainwright had always treated the girl as his daughter and legal heir, which fastened itself in Evelyn's mind.

He loved that unhappy, disinherited young lady. For the love he bore her, in silence and without return, he resolved to do all that a sharp, patient lawyer could do, to ascertain what her position really was, and to look for some good reason for an attempt to break the will and restore to her what she had lost.

And so he sailed for Cuba without even the encouragement of feeling that she wished any one to interfere.

When the New Year came in, Evelyn was in Cuba, Coralie Clyde was as completely lost as if she had soared to the sky, and John Garwell, in the desperate necessities of his situation, was devoting himself to a woman whom he despised far more than he loved—Myra Wainwright.

Coralie's flight had placed him in an awkward and uneasy plight. The creditors whom he had silenced with fair promises came about him again like a swarm of wasps. His father, to whom some of them had appealed, was very angry with him; would not advance ten dollars beyond the sum necessary for his daily wants, and even threatened to turn him out of his house. In this desperate plight he naturally recalled the flattering preference of Miss Myra for himself.

He had fancied sweet little Coralie well enough to be satisfied to compel her to become his wife; but the vain, selfish Myra he had studied and fathomed only to despise. However—something had to be done! Behold him, on New Year's evening, at her feet!

Scarcely two weeks since Coralie's disappearance, yet he was already the suitor of another and wealthier lady!

That first day of the New Year had been a long, miserable day to Ethel. As when we first saw her standing by the window in the first agony of her father's illness, so she stood now, for hours—a little back from the view of the hundreds of "callers" who thronged that fashionable street—staring, with strange, bright, feverish eyes at the glittering equipages rolling by. This gay, outside world was so changed to her from what it had been, a year ago!

She knew that John Garwell came often to see Myra. She now knew him as he was—an unprincipled man; but it is almost as hard to root out a dead love as a living one—and to tear the traitor from her warm, tender, human heart gave her many a fierce pang, notwithstanding her respect for him was dead.

Very sadly and wisely she looked on, wondering at Myra more even than at him; for she knew that her cousin was not deceived in his character or motives. She did not know that Myra long had loved him, with a passionate, reckless devotion which some persons can give to a single object, while they are hard and selfish to all the rest of the world.

John Garwell had opened the one sweet fountain in Myra's spirit; for him it shone clear and full.

The brief wintry afternoon of New Year's day stole swiftly on. The Wainwrights, owing to their mourning, did not receive.

A servant came to call Miss Ethel to the five o'clock dinner. She was cold and pale, and had eaten nothing since breakfast; but she felt as if the sight of the table, with Myra at its head, would be hateful to her; so she lingered a few minutes where she was; then went slowly down the broad stairs; but, when she reached the main hall it required more firmness than she had left to keep on to the dining-room.

She turned and entered the little boudoir back of the double drawing-rooms. It was dark there, and peaceful. The windows of the boudoir faced the west. Through the parted long silken curtains came the light of a just-risen full moon, whose silver radiance struggled coldly with the warm flush of sunset. Ethel, choking down her tears—lonely, desolate, sick of life—slipped in here, went to one of the windows, dropped the heavy curtains behind her, and stood there a long, long time, in a dream-world illuminated by moonlight—a world once sweet as June, but ghastly and frozen now, like the poor rose-bushes which rattled their icy branches against the pane.

"Alone! alone! Oh, I wish I were dead!" whispered her dry lips, as she lifted her beautiful, pallid face—like marble in that silver light—to the far-off heaven.

Poor Ethel! she knew nothing of the one love, earnest heart which loved her with true, manly love—the love that protects, that reveres, that works for its idol. She never gave a thought to the poor young lawyer who was serving her, or trying to serve her, with his best effort.

Absorbed in her own intense emotions, she did not hear or see the entrance of two people into the moonlit boudoir.

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### CURIOUS LOVE-MAKING.

It was Myra and John Garwell who entered. John had been dining with the fairy mistress of the mansion.

They walked up to the other window, over which the curtain was not dropped. They stood there a moment in silence.

The lovely light shone down into the blue eyes of the little lady, and fell over her soft white dress

and black ribbons. She looked at the moon and John looked at her.

"How lovely!" she sighed, after quite an effective pause.

"I was just thinking so," was the low answer.

"I meant the moon," she laughed.

"I meant the face it shone on," he laughed.

"Not so lovely as Ethel's or Coralie's, I dare say!" "You are jealous of them, Myra! You need not be. Ethel was interesting to me once; but I could not marry an—an—I can't say it to you, Myra, but you know what I mean—"

"Yes; I don't wonder at that. It goes hard for me, too, proud as I am of my blood, to keep on calling her *cousin* when she is only a—you know what I mean. Still, to keep from wounding her, I allow her to still 'cousin' me."

"Then you don't blame me for breaking off with her?"

"Certainly not. You could hardly have done otherwise."

"Thanks. Then as to pretty Coralie, she would have made a spirited wife for a man who did not care for her. I wish I knew that all was right with the little thing, but I was glad when she ran away from me. Her aunts made the match. Neither of us cared for the other. But I was willing to marry her for the sake of getting my debts paid. You see how frank I am? I am so much in debt, as hard up as ever. My father is awfully down on me, at present. I don't want to make myself out a shade whiter than I am; I always have been a black sheep. But, Myra, fairy, sweet Myra, I really *do* love you, as well as adore your fortune. I am a fortune-hunter; very well! I will acknowledge it, if I can, at the same time, make you believe that at last I have found the one woman who can bring me not money only but all the rapture that comes with knowing that the one I adore returns my passion. If you could love and trust me, fairy, I would promise you to reform all my bad habits—to be a model husband. Speak to me, Myra! Don't say that I am mistaken in my hope that you take some interest in a worthless fellow like me! Tell me that you do not quite hate me, sweet!"

Myra's bosom heaved; her small figure trembled; a light almost fierce leaped out of her great blue eyes.

"John Garwell," she answered him, in a passionate voice, "I am more and worse than a fool. I know that you do not care for me any more than for any other passably-pretty woman who could bring you money. I know that. I know that I love you with a mad idolatry—you, just as you are, faults, meanness, vices and all! I love you. You do not care a pin for me. What of that? I have power!—the power that great wealth gives. I am far richer than you believe me to be. I have become acquainted with facts that will put me in possession of a million dollars' worth of property, outside of what was willed to me here. My money will make me dear to you. Very well. I accept the terms. I have long wanted to be your wife; and I have not the common sense to refuse you. I take you, with my eyes open, because I love you. I loved you when I was a poor little dependent on Ethel's bounty, and you would not look twice at me! Now, you offer yourself to me, while Ethel is pale and heart-sick with jealousy. Is not *that* a triumph? You are mine, now, darling, while Ethel is dying for love of you," and she smiled up at him and put her arms about his neck.

"A sweet woman!" thought the lover to himself; but he had no time to answer before some one glided like a spirit out of some unseen place and stood beside them.

"Ethel!" cried Myra, almost believing that she confronted her cousin's spirit and not her body, so pale was the girl and so brightly and strangely did her eyes flame.

"I am not dying for love of you, Mr. Garwell," she spoke in a cold, sharp voice that cut like steel. "Myra is mistaken there. I despise you too completely to love you. I consider that all I have lost is not too much to pay for my happy escape from a marriage with you. I am wretched, it is true; but not from the cause you assign. If my heart is broken, you did not break it. Relieve your conscience of that weight. My contempt for you is simply inexpressible. I can congratulate you and Myra on your choice of each other. I never saw a couple better mated. And now, Myra, I have resolved never again to put you to the trouble or shame of calling me cousin. I have wanted to leave the house ever since I began to observe the development of your true character. I have now no excuse for waiting longer, even to shield you from the criticism of those who may charge you with conduct lacking in magnanimity and gratitude."

The pale, spirit-like girl turned and swept out of the room with the haughty grace of a queen; neither of the two spoke, or asked her to tarry, even till the morning.

Ethel, after leaving the boudoir, went at once to her room. "Where shall I go?" she cried aloud. "Oh, where shall I turn? Not for worlds would I pass another night under this roof! Oh, I know what they mean! Myra would not call a disowned and nameless woman her cousin. Oh, father, did you do me this cruel wrong? How much kinder if you had left me to my sad lot, rather than to have lifted me so high that I might be dashed to pieces at last. Now I am orphaned, indeed! Now I am crushed—no! never crushed, though they heap mountains on my defenseless head. Never crushed, so long as my own heart is pure—my own purposes lofty. But it is hard—hard—hard to bear!"

"Where shall I go? What shall I do? He, Mr. Wainwright, was so thoughtful, so considerate, as to leave me ten thousand dollars. I scorn his charity.



Hear me, Heaven, swear that I will never touch one dollar of it, so long as this cloud rests on my birth! Oh, father, how I loved you! How I revered you! You never could have had a daughter who would have honored you more. But, that is done with. It will be hard for me to forgive you. If you had plotted a cruel revenge on me for some great wrong, you could have planned nothing more perfect than this."

While saying this she had been walking about, distractedly; she now paused, pressed her hands to her temples, and tried to collect her thoughts for the effort before her.

"Pride is a faithful servant," she murmured, "when love and hope have fled. Come, kind pride, help me to bear this change without loss of self-respect. Pride will uphold me, comfort me coldly, be my friend and companion."

She took away her hands from her head, and began to put together a few articles of clothing. Curiously enough, she chose the plainest of the dresses which she had worn before Mr. Wainwright's death.

"No more mourning for one who worked me this woe," she whispered, as she disrobed herself of her heavy black dress, and put on in its place a walking suit of brown silk, one of the least elegant of her costly wardrobe.

"I must learn to wait on myself," she continued, as she found a traveling-bag in a closet, and filled it with the most necessary articles.

She looked in her purse—an exquisite wallet, set thick with rose-diamonds—and counted eight dollars.

"Before this is gone, I must find some way to earn my living," reflected this gentle girl, who had never in her life so much as dressed herself without help.

But there were new lines of firmness about the spirited, curved lips, and a new fire in the dark eyes—an indomitable spirit within which promised to rise up in the hour of need, and prove itself master of circumstance.

"I will not go to one of my father's friends," she mused, sinking into a chair, when her small preparations were made. "What right has one like me to go to these proud people of the world? I will not appeal to Mr. Dobell, because I know that he will ridicule my sensitiveness and force upon me that ten thousand dollars which I hate. He will insist on fighting the will—on shaming Myra, or threatening her, to make her divide with me. None of this will I have. Since I am what I am, there is no fixed place in this cruel world for me. I must creep into some odd corner, and draw my breath by the grace of God. To Him—to my Heavenly Father—I am still perhaps a human soul, with the right to live and do my duty."

"I will go to my old nurse. She thinks a great deal of me—or used to. Her humble home is as neat as this; she will be glad to rent a room to me. Surely I can earn bread enough to feed my hunger. I, Ethel Wainwright—as they called me then—used to be considered 'highly accomplished.' I wonder if my Parisian-French, my flower-painting, my much-flattered musical powers, my exquisite embroidery after the Kensington-school designs, will one or all of them earn me a few dollars a week, so that I can pay my good nurse honestly for her room, and keep myself in bread and shoes? *I can try.*"

With this wise motto on her lips, Ethel arose, took up the heavy bag, and went out into the corridor. Here she set the bag down, and hesitated. She was timid about going out into the street alone after dark. She had her old nurse's address, and knew just what street-cars to take to reach it, for she frequently visited her in her humble but tidy quarters.

"I will ask Norah to go with me; she will not be afraid to return alone, since she is accustomed to it. But—Norah is out—I gave her permission, I remember now; and Lizette belongs to Myra."

At that moment Myra's maid came through the passage, and paused, on seeing Miss Ethel with her bonnet on and a traveling-bag beside her. Her look seemed to ask:

"Is mademoiselle going on a journey?"

Ethel looked into the kind, vivacious countenance of the French girl.

"Lizette, can you come with me, and help me with this bag? I will not keep you out more than an hour."

"Certainly," replied the maid in French, as the young lady had spoken to her in that language. "I will be glad to accompany mademoiselle. My young lady is engaged in the drawing-room, and will not miss me." Lizette's eyes sparkled with curiosity; it was plain that she suspected something of importance was going on.

She would not allow the young lady to touch the bag, but carried it down herself. The liveried and pompous new footman whom Myra had established in place of the old civil servant who had been discharged, opened the door to allow them to pass out, and in a moment more Ethel stood on the pavement, before that house in which she had passed nearly all of the nineteen years of her life.

She looked back at it, and the tears rushed into her eyes. But a car was coming, and she hurried after Lizette, who had stopped it and was getting in with her bag.

In a few moments they had to change to a cross-line, going north, and in twenty minutes more they left this car for a humble court, built up with small, neat two-story red-brick houses—the comfortable homes of respectable working-people, poor, but not poverty-stricken.

"We have to walk to the end of the court, Lizette; let me help you with the bag; it is too heavy for one so slight and young as you. How old are you, Lizette?"

"Seventeen, mademoiselle."

"Have you parents?"

"No, mademoiselle."

"I pity you. I have none, either," said the young lady, as the two walked on side by side, carrying the luggage between them.

The pretty maid stole a compassionate look into the pale, proud face; a look not only of compassion but of intelligence and sympathy. Servants know far more about the affairs of a house than their masters suspect; and this one knew more than some others.

"Mademoiselle," she said, hesitatingly, as they came to No. 1012 of the court, and set their luggage on the white marble step—even the domicles of the poor have white marble steps in the Quaker City—"I know it is awfully wicked—and naughty—that I should not do it, but—I was in the little boudoir, behind the tall chair in the corner—and—and I heard what passed there this evening."

"Lizette, how could you?" cried the young lady, shocked.

"Oh, it was the amusement to hear them make love," ran on the pretty maid, not much heeding the pained look of the other. "There is not often that people do make such love, I should say," and she burst into an irrepressible laugh, so gay and joyous that Ethel forgot to be very angry. "I beg mademoiselle's pardon for laughing," she said, as soon as she could control herself, "but it was much absurd."

"Lizette, I am surprised at you! If I were to do my duty I should have your mistress informed of your eavesdropping."

"Ah, do not scold me, mademoiselle. I love you so dearly. Indeed, it was an accident. I could not endure that you should go without dining, and I had come in search of you, when I heard those others coming in at the door, and I jumped behind the chair before I thought; and then I was ashamed to present myself, so I remained," and Lizette's bright eyes sparkled in the light of the court-lamp as she raised them appealingly. "You would not turn a poor girl out of her place?"

"Not for one offense, Lizette."

"Oh, thanks. I knew mademoiselle would be merciful. Why do I tell you my fault? Only that I love you—that I hope to be of service to you. Know that, humble as Lizette is, she may sometimes do you a favor—that she loves you, mademoiselle, from the bottom of her heart."

Forlorn and friendless as Ethel was, these words had a charm for her; the sweet, fresh voice of the maid touched her heart; she took the two rosy cheeks in her hands and kissed the pretty mouth.

"I don't scorn your friendship, Lizette," she said. "There, child, ring the bell, please."

## CHAPTER X.

### A SISTER'S REVENGE.

SOME time in the latter part of February, Webster Evelyn returned from Cuba. He came back in very low spirits indeed. He had gained worlds of information but it all went to make Ethel's cause more hopeless. Mr. Dobell had furnished the money for the trip, and to this faithful friend of Ethel's Evelyn disclosed the results of his search, before he made an attempt to see the young lady about it.

"The devil's to pay, in her case," was the lawyer's first greeting, in a gloomy tone.

"What's up?" asked Evelyn, eagerly.

"She will not live with her cousin, as the will suggested—she will not touch the \$10,000 left to her—she has taken a room in the cottage of a woman who, years ago, was a sort of nursery-governess to her; and there she is wearing those beautiful eyes out doing high-church embroidery and painting but-tercups and daisies that seem to have the dew and perfume of the living things. She told me, only yesterday, that she enjoyed it—that she had not failed to pay her modest rent and to keep off hunger, so far. By George! I could not help admiring her grit! She looked lovely, too. She filled that humble room with radiance, she did, I tell you, Evelyn! I have never had a client in whom I took such an unselfish interest. I never expect any pecuniary reward for what I do for her. But, what is your news? Your last letter whetted my curiosity to a sharp edge."

Evelyn listened to the lawyer's panegyric on the woman he loved with a glowing smile in his dark-blue eyes; all that was said about her breaking off from her family and trying to take care of herself only kindled a sweet, warm hope in his breast.

"My chance will be the better," was what he thought.

"Why don't you begin?" asked his companion, impatiently; and with a blush, the young man came out of his pleasant reverie.

"It is quite a long story, Mr. Dobell."

"Of course."

"And the end of it is most unfavorable to the cause of your client."

"Give me the facts—all that you have."

"Well, to begin at the beginning. Cyrill Wainwright was married, as he declared, to a wealthy Cuban lady, at the time he stated, and she *did* bear him a child—yes, two children, a son and a daughter—and she died before his return from Cuba, all as he represented."

"Ah! what was there wrong, then?"

"That is it—there were many collateral as well as these main points. When Mr. Wainwright visited Havana, in the interests of his father, he made the acquaintance of a gentleman named Julian Yosedo, the wealthiest planter on the island, and with whom the young representative of the Philadelphia merchant had large dealings. Mr. Yosedo invited him to his house in Havana; and afterward to his country residence situated in the midst of the most

charming scenery, including wide-stretching plantations, lovely gardens, and glimpses of distant mountains and the purple, southern sea. The Cuban had two daughters—Marie, aged nineteen, and Isabella, aged seventeen, at the time when young Wainwright made their acquaintance. Both ladies were lovely; but the younger one was lovely as a dream. Cyrill fell immediately in love with her; her soft, large, brilliant eyes, dark as night, and bright as heaven, fascinated him at once. Thus charmed by one fair sister, he was devoted to both; for he had not yet gained boldness to declare his love; and politeness demanded that he should be equally attentive to both.

"Ladies so cultivated, so beautiful, and so wealthy, had plenty of suitors; but the father favored the stranger perhaps more than any one else. He made Cyrill always welcome, as I have said; and in the delightful seclusion of their country-place, Cyrill was like a member of the family. Every day he rode, drove, sailed, played croquet, went on excursions, danced, sung, with the young ladies. It was impossible for him long to delay speaking to Mr. Yosedo of his hopes; nor was there reason for delay, since he had been made so welcome. He declared his love for Isabella with a passionate burst of eloquence which made the father smile."

"If you can win Isabella, you are free to try," he answered. "She is young and may hardly know her own mind. I had an idea that it was Marie you would ask me to give up to you, you selfish fellow!" playfully.

"Marie!" cried Cyrill. "I never aspired to her, dear sir. She is handsome as a queen, noble, splendid—I admire her beyond words—but it is Isabella whom I love. Since you give me leave, it will not be an hour before I learn my fate. Farewell, dear Mr. Yosedo; I must fly to my young love and win from her sweet lips an answer to my question."

"Smiling, glowing, happy, the lover ran out of the large room in which they had been sitting—a spacious parlor on the first floor, with wide-open French windows, and surrounded by one of those long piazzas so necessary to a Southern house."

"He went out by one of the windows, and as he did so, was surprised to see Marie standing near, very pale, with a strange expression on her face, which caused him to pause and ask if she were ill; but she turned from him so abruptly that he left her, and went on his eager way to a perfumed arbor in the garden where Isabella was sitting with a book—never for a moment guessing at the reason of her sister's paleness and embarrassment."

"He won his suit—I go into the particulars," Evelyn suddenly interrupted himself, laughing, "not as I imagine they were but as I learned them. The fond young couple were married, after a brief engagement. Marie, also, was married, on the same day, to a rich Spaniard whom she had once refused."

"Now comes the painful and sorrowful part of the story. Marie loved Cyrill Wainwright with a fierce, devouring passion of which only a fiery Southern woman is capable. She wedded, out of spite and pride, a man she detested. But she covered the feelings which rankled in her breast—affected a kindness to Isabella and Cyrill which made them devoted to her—but all the time she secretly brooded over a revenge which should thoroughly satisfy her. Time passed, swiftly to one sister—slowly to the other."

"The only exaction made by Mr. Yosedo in giving away his youngest was that Cyrill should agree to remain in Cuba for a few years; the father could not resign his pet too entirely."

"A year after her marriage Isabella was the proud mother of a lovely boy. The father and grandfather were in ecstasies over the little son. But, in less than three months, the infant, apparently so healthy, sickened, died and was buried. The whole family was wild with grief. Then it was that her sister Marie was most tender to the bereaved mother. There was no solace for any one, until, as months rolled on, it was found that another babe was to be expected."

"Some time before the birth of the second child Marie urged upon her sister the services of a Cuban woman—a girl who had been her own personal attendant for many years—a native of the island, of a bold and striking style of beauty. This girl, Olive, had been secretly married, it was said, to one of the men on the plantation, and was to become a mother about the same time that another heir was expected in the family of her master."

"Marie plead that Olive's youth, vigor and devotion to the family would make her invaluable as a nurse for the coming heir. Olive's own babe could be nursed by one of the plantation women. You see through the whole thing, now, I dare say, Mr. Dobell?" observed Evelyn, pausing.

"Changed off the babies, of course."

"Yes."

"Stereotyped situation, that?"

"Yes. And unpleasant for Miss Ethel, all the same. To go on: Mrs. Wainwright's second child was a girl, which caused some disappointment, but it was warmly welcomed, after all. The girl, Olive, gave birth to a child the following day. No one at the house saw it, but it was reported to be a boy; it was given over to a nurse on the plantation, and in a week, more or less, Olive came into Mrs. Wainwright's apartment as nurse to the little girl, Ethel—named Ethel after the father's mother, who was English."

"Olive proved to be a most devoted nurse. Faithful as southern nurses usually are, her affection for the pretty little creature whom she tended proved to be something more than the ordinary. Not only the family, but strangers noticed it."

"Cyrill rested in the assurance that no baby



could be more fondly and tenderly cared for than his.

"Months rolled peacefully on. In the course of time the impression that Olive's baby was a boy was corrected—it was a girl, its mother said, and as soon as it could toddle it was brought up to the house as a companion for little Ethel. Both children had dark, liquid, bright eyes; good features and clear, dark skins. The child of poor, low-born Olive was equally as attractive as the little heiress of the splendid houses of Wainwright and Yosedo. Her clothes were less elaborate, but her face was piquant and lovely.

"Olive never seemed to care for her own child one hundredth part as much as for the one she nursed.

"All these years Donna Marie—she was a donna now, for she had married a 'don'—had no children. But she did not seem to feel their loss.

"There were furrows on her once smooth brow; and a compressed expression about her lips, not pleasant to see. She had taken up her residence in Havana, so that sometimes the sisters did not meet for weeks. When they did, the contrast between them constantly grew greater. Isabella was a happy wife, lovelier than ever, sweeter than ever, the light of Cyrill's eyes. Marie was sour and faded, her husband was said to be completely under her thumb, so fearful were the bursts of temper in which she indulged.

"Lovely little Ethel was about two years old when, one hot term, in June—Marie and all her friends were about her at the time—Mrs. Wainwright suddenly sickened, and died within forty-eight hours. The doctors attributed her fatal attack to the terrible heat.

"As soon as he could settle up his affairs, Cyrill, heartbroken and weary of life, returned to his native city, bringing his little daughter with him. Olive was determined that she would desert her own little one to come with Ethel; but Mr. Wainwright did not think it right for her to do so, and would not permit it. Lavishing presents upon baby Olive and her mother, almost enough to enrich them, he came away, leaving the devoted nurse in Havana.

"My theory, Mr. Dobell, is this: Cyrill Wainwright never talked to Ethel about her dead mother because he could never recover from the blow of her sudden loss, in the prime of her youth and beauty, enough to bring himself to face that past with its sufferings. Still, there may have been a deeper reason for this strange silence.

"Again, on the theory that the children were exchanged the night of their birth, through the plotting of Donna Marie, I think that Mr. Wainwright had no suspicion of the state of the case until that woman paid him that mysterious visit, a few weeks before his death. Donna Marie was then dead—she died, I learned, last summer—and could no longer bribe Olive to silence; so the creature came to Philadelphia to wring money out of the man she had betrayed. She, either in anger or with set purpose, then revealed to him that he had cherished, worshiped, educated—not his own daughter, but a girl of basest blood, of despised parentage.

"In the shock of the truth, Mr. Wainwright then drew up the will which has since been admitted as the valid will. But, unable to unteach himself the love he bore the girl who had grown up as his child, and troubled even unto death by the miserable state of affairs—Olive had told him that his own daughter was dead, years before—he had, feeling his illness coming upon him, relented from that first will, and strove to make another and juster one, which death did not permit him to sign.

"All this looks bad—frightfully bad—for my pet client. And the worst of it all, if possible, is that her mother still lives, and may proclaim herself Ethel's mother any day. She must be a wicked, low, unfeeling wretch; and the shock to that proud girl will be awful.

"I have thought of that, Mr. Dobell. Is there no way for us to guard Miss Ethel from such a knowledge?"

"None occurs to me now. I must think it over. Evelyn, are you quite certain that the other girl is dead, as Olive represents?"

"No; on the contrary, I believe she is still living. I gave particular attention to that point. There is a very beautiful girl living in Havana—I contrived to get a glimpse of her, and she is as splendid a creature as I ever beheld—living in the care of some sisters there. She was educated in their school, and after she graduated, she continued to live under their care. She dresses magnificently, and is understood to be the daughter of a wealthy Cuban who was killed a few years ago in a skirmish with the Spanish soldiers; but, by Jove, I believe she is the true daughter of Cyrill Wainwright."

"One little thing gave me the clew to that. I learned that all the money supplied for her expenses came through a certain low-caste woman, who pretended to have been made the young lady's guardian. I saw that woman the day before I left Havana. She corresponded to the description of Olive, and had just returned from a trip to the United States. Oh, by the way!" went on Evelyn, after pausing as if at the end of what he had to say, "there is something most curious connected with what I learned of this girl—Dolores, they call her in the convent. This something almost persuades me that I am on the wrong track. I made the acquaintance of a young cadet—a Baltimore naval cadet—at my hotel in Havana. He made a thousand eager inquiries about Philadelphia, when he learned I came from there. His ship lay out in the bay, and he had leave of absence to visit the city for a few days. It is certainly a strange thing, but he inquired after the Misses Featherlight and their niece, and when I told him of Miss Clyde's disappearance, I

thought he would die on the spot. Of course, I understood at once that he was a lover of hers; and I promised to telegraph him the day I reached this city, if there was any news of her."

"No news," said the lawyer, briefly; "but what gave this cadet such an interest to you?"

"A curious coincidence. He was haunting Havana in search of his parents. Wasn't that queer? He was adopted, when a small child, by the gentleman who has brought him up, and who found him in a home for orphans, where he went by the name of Bertram Leigh. He has only the faintest clew to his real parentage; does not believe Leigh to be his true name; has made no discoveries so far; but—and here comes the strangeness again—the last evening, as I was surreptitiously scaling the convent wall, for an observation of the pretty girls in the garden, wandering about in the full moonlight, whom should I find engaged in the same naughty business of scaling the wall but this young cadet!—and he confided to me that there was a beautiful girl in there whom he believed to be a relative of his!"

"Don't muddle your brains about this beardless cadet, Evelyn. We have puzzles enough of our own. One thing I am glad of—that that old hag, Olive is back in Cuba, instead of hanging about my client."

"No telling how soon she may return," averred Evelyn. "I suppose I must go telegraph to Bertram Leigh that Miss Coralie Clyde is still among the missing."

## CHAPTER XI.

### KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

"I AM sorry Ethel went away as she did, notwithstanding it was such a trial to me to have her here, she being what she is," remarked Myra to John Garwell on the day after Ethel's precipitate retreat from the house. "I believe in keeping up appearances before the world; and some people will think I am to blame for her going away, which might hurt me in their estimation; yet you know, John, that I was perfectly willing she should stay the year out, as advised in the will."

"You are a noble creature, Myra—magnanimous almost beyond belief," smiled her fiancé.

"You are making fun of me now, John," pouted Myra. "Never mind! I possess a secret which will make me very valuable to you—more than I now am. But I sha'n't tell it to you until you are more polite to me."

"I can wait until we are married, fairy. You'll tell it to me then."

"That will not be for some time to come."

"How long?" asked the lover, quickly. "You know how impatient I am, dearest!"

"Yes, I know. Your debts are very pressing, no doubt! But I have no idea of making myself ridiculous. I shall be laughed at, behind my back, by everybody, if I marry you before the memory of your affair with Coralie Clyde grows a little dim. I have no mind to have the world jest about my taking up with a fortune-hunter. If I know that to be the truth, others need not be so wise."

"Come, come, fairy! you are rather hard on a fellow!"

"No, John, on the contrary, no one could be more lenient with you than I am. I have been thinking over your affairs, and I have decided that rather than hurry up our wedding in the face of *les convenances*, I would prefer to lend you a sum of money sufficient to rid you of your most importunate duns."

"Adorable Myra! you are indeed both wise and generous," and John actually spoke with some real feeling, so great was the mental relief this proposition brought him. "But I can not accept such an offer."

"Oh, yes you can—and will," was the cool reply. "You see that, although I love you, John, I am not blind to your faults. Come! how much will suffice?"

It was evening, and every light was blazing in the two artistic chandeliers of the long double drawing-room—for Myra fairly basked in warmth and light, a cat, that luxury-loving creature whose claws, though sheathed in velvet, are so quick to strike—as the pair walked slowly up and down from one end to the other of the magnificent suite. There were plenty of wax-candles, too, in heavy silver candelabra; and the air, of summer warmth, was rich with the breath of great vases of cut roses and cape-jasmines.

The mistress of this beautiful house was restrained, by circumstances, from at present filling it with gay and fashionable company, as she would have liked; but whatever chance there was for display and extravagance, that she improved. The florist had orders to keep the house fragrant with fresh and costly flowers; the dinner was as elaborate, each day, as if for a state occasion; and, although she dressed in strict mourning when she went out, at home Myra indulged in soft trailing dresses of white India mull or grenadine.

To-night, having given orders that she was not at home to any save Mr. Garwell, she had dressed to please herself. She wore a robe of thick, lustrous silk of the palest blue; and her brow, hair, bosom, and arms, glittered and shimmered with diamonds—Ethel's diamonds!—large, lustrous, pure-white stones, of wonderful size and purity, a heritage of the Yosedo family, who had taken a pride in collecting the finest diamonds of which they could hear. These precious jewels had only been worn by Ethel two or three times since she came of age;—they were suited, indeed, only to a married lady—and were kept, generally in the vaults of the bank; but

Myra had sent for them that day that she might enjoy the keen pleasure of handling and wearing them—wearing them under the eyes of her lover.

They glimmered and coruscated, casting off flakes of green, and crimson, and blue, from their central fires, quivering and expanding into little worlds of light as they caught the rays of the various burners, as their wearer promenaded slowly, clinging to the arm of the man she had bribed into calling himself her lover.

The sumptuous drawing-room through which they walked could never have come under the head of those stereotyped parlors furnished by upholsterers and cabinet-makers to order. It was not money which spread itself on the floor and hung itself on the walls; although every article was costly, it was also tasteful, harmonious and exquisite of its kind.

There were a few large pictures of such worth that they were a little fortune of themselves—pictures which bore the study of hours and days. Nothing looked new.

The chairs and sofas, of beautiful Oriental woods, had a substantial but not an obtrusive look; the thick satin which cushioned them agreed in tone with the curtains and walls. The tinted ceiling was lovely, and its tints and designs gave the large apartment an airy look.

There was profusion, richness and variety in the furniture, the *bis-a-brac*, and the ornamentation of the room; but no confusion of effects. The only mar to its beauty was some expensive and glaring pieces which Myra's taste and desire for change had forced in among the older and sedater furniture. The little boudoir back of the drawing-room had been entirely remodeled by her—it was all blue silk and gold and flowery panels of satinwood; and the chambers had all been furnished anew; but the drawing-room had not been much harmed, while the dining-room—also a fine, large room—had been left as it was.

It would have astonished the shade of generous Cyril Wainwright to have learned how much the new heiress had contrived to waste in the three months since his death. And this work now promised to go on still more bravely.

"How much do you need to prevent any serious annoyance until the first of June? I cannot think of an earlier wedding than in the coming summer, John."

"I don't—I really don't like to tell you, fairy," asserted John, while his heart was thumping with joy.

"But I wish it."

"Really?"

"Seriously. What would my love amount to, John, if I allowed you to be fretted and annoyed, when it was in my power to remove the trouble? I do this freely, and of my own accord. I shall be miserable if you refuse me."

"Well then, darling, if I had eighteen thousand dollars with which to quiet some of my creditors—I lost heavily, you must know, at the October races—I believe that the governor would come round by-and-by and help me out of the rest of my embarrassments. I never mean to bet on horses again, fairy—indeed, I do not! I have found out how bad it is."

"I hope you will keep that resolution, John," said the girl, looking fondly up into his face. "As to the money, you shall have it. I have some blank checks in my writing-desk, in here. I will fill up one for the amount you speak of, and sign it, to-night," and she drew him along into the boudoir.

"For once, I feel ashamed of myself," remarked her companion.

"Dear John, I don't wish you to feel under obligations to me. I do this freely because—I love you so," ended Myra, in a passionate whisper.

"How bright this moonlight is, fairy!"

"Yes; but not bright enough to write by. John, have you a match?"

"Yes; I always carry a pocket match-box."

"Then, light the gas, will you, please? I don't care to call a servant in here now—those creatures are so full of curiosity!"

Myra felt in her pocket for the key of the desk while John sought for his match-box.

At that moment as they stood in the white moonlight of the fairy boudoir, a voice came from the air over their heads—a deep, strange, solemn voice—not loud and yet soul-piercing—a voice mysterious and full of awe, filling the little room with its weird vibrations. The words which it spoke were impressive, and fell like the notes of the last trump on the surprised ears of the pair:

"BEWARE, Myra Wainwright, how you give that which is not yours to give. When I died without time to sign the will I intended to leave as my last will and testament, I was troubled, for I knew that you, my brother's child, were of a cold and avaricious nature. I am permitted to say this to you—BE JUST—BE JUST—BE JUST—if you would escape the snare."

The voice died away in an unearthly whisper. For a full moment after it ceased the listeners stood motionless.

"Light the gas," Myra gasped, the first to break the spell.

"What confounded trick is this? Who dares to do this thing?" cried John, boldly; but when he had lighted the gas and turned on a bright blaze, Myra saw that his hand shook and that he was very pale.

As for her, she shivered so that she could not stand.

She sunk onto the sofa behind her, wide-eyed and trembling.

"It is some infernal trick," asserted her lover, soon recovering his composure. "I don't believe in the supernatural, myself! What room is over this, Myra?"

"Mine," she answered him, still shaking.



"Then all I have to say is that some one is in there, trying to convert us to a belief in ghosts."

"Who? There is no one in the house but servants. And who knew that I was about to give you money?"

"I knew it," began the ghostly voice again. "John Garwell, the spirit of Coralle Clyde, whom you drove to drown herself in the river, demands that I for bid you to take that which is not this woman's to give."

A cold sweat broke out on the forehead of the young man. But he rallied, presently, and grew angry.

"Is this some trick of yours, Myra, pretending that you wish to help me and then trying to frighten me? 'I don't scare worth a cent,' to use the slang of the streets, Myra. I didn't ask you to make this loan, did I?"

"No, John, no. Don't be angry with me! I am so terrified!"

"Will you take me up to your room at once?"

"Certainly. Come, if you will."

"Softly, Myra—perhaps we can catch this ventriloquist at his tricks."

They stole out of the boudoir, through the hall, up the stairs, along a corridor, Myra clinging timidly to her lover; the upper hall was well-lighted and they had met no one on their way.—"This is my room," whispered Myra, and John silently and quickly jumped into the room designated.

The gas was burning brightly here, too. Not a creature was in the room. John examined the closets, the dressing-room; Myra peeped under the sofa and bed and behind the window-curtains. The gentleman then turned his scrutiny to the carpet in search of some opening in the floor—he could find none.

"Where are the servants?" he asked.

"My maid, Lizette, asked permission to spend the evening out, after she had dressed me. Ethel's waiting-woman I discharged this morning—she went away before luncheon. The seamstress has a few days' holiday to spend with her mother. I suppose the footman and cook, and all the rest, are at dinner—it is their hour."

"May I look in these other rooms?"

"Yes—anywhere you please."

He made a casual survey of the whole floor.

"Suppose you ring and ascertain if all the servants are in their dining-room," suggested John, as the two went down-stairs.

Myra did so; yes, they were just finishing their dinner.

The lovers entered the drawing-room and walked about a little.

"You are not going to be frightened out of keeping your promise to me?" ventured John.

He felt the little creature on his arm trembling.

"Must I do it to-night, John?"

"To-night, or never!" was the surly answer.

"Very well. You must come with me into the boudoir. I dare not come in here alone."

They re-entered the gay little room, all bright with its painted panels and silk furniture and flowers.

This time Myra opened her desk, got a blank check, filled it out for the large sum of \$13,000, and was about to sign her name, when the whole air of the place was filled with hollow and derisive laughter.

The pen dropped from her hand.

"Oh, John, I dare not do it!"

"Little fool! Afraid of spirits! There are no spirits; and if there were, they would be harmless to mortals."

"But my uncle! If it were any other—"

"It is some devilish trick, I tell you! Myra, you don't care much for me, do you, after all?"

He was leaning over her; he had conquered his anger and forced himself to speak very tenderly.

"Think of it, fairy love. I am ruined—past salvation—unless you help me, as you said you would."

His hand caressed her jeweled hair.

"I will do it," she cried, hurriedly. "I would rather bear the anger of my uncle's ghost than yours!" and she bent and wrote her name on the paper.

"Thanks, thanks, my own true love," murmured John, drawing back her graceful head to kiss her forehead—at the same time securing the check in the long fingers of his right hand. "I will not forget what you have done for me, ever, ever!"

A ghostly groan ran shivering through the air.

"Oh, John, this is terrible!"

"Nonsense! Tell the old spook to go back where he belongs!" smiling playfully as he pocketed the check.

"Aren't you afraid, John?"

"Not a bit of it. I would face all the ghosts of Hades for eighteen thousand dollars," kissing her, shutting up her desk, and drawing her into the parlors. "Was that the bell, fairy?"

"Yes; I'll ask the footman who came in," going to the door opening into the hall, and returning. "It is only Lizette. She always comes in early."

"Give me a song, fairy. Don't think about the spirits. Let us have some music," and he seated her at the piano.

Myra sung beautifully—her voice was as much too big for her little body as a nightingale's. John was in an excellent humor, and listened to her songs with patience for over an hour, albeit he cared little for music. He was so gracious, so devoted, so flattering, that Myra would have been in the seventh heaven of bliss if she could have entirely forgotten what had occurred in the boudoir.

It was after eleven before she would let her lover go, for she dreaded to be left alone. The burly footman was slumbering in a hall chair when Mr. Garwell woke him, to bar the door after his exit.

Myra had all the cowardice of guilt and cunning.

The moment her lover left the house she flew up to her room and locked her door, as if bolts would keep out what she feared.

"I shall burn the gas all night," she muttered. "Lizette must come and get into bed with me."

Without any compunctions at disturbing the sleeper she went to the closet off her room where the dressing-maid slept, shook Lizette's dimpled shoulder and ordered her to get up and come and share her bed.

"I'm afraid, now that Ethel's gone," she explained, briefly.

"*Tres bien, mademoiselle,*" murmured the girl, sleepily, and stumbled out of her warm nest, hardly knowing what she was about. "*Doucement—doucement! Ne voyez-vous pas comme j'ai sommeil?*" [Very well, miss. Softly, softly! Do you not see how sleepy I am?]

## CHAPTER XII.

### LIFTING AWAY THE VAIL.

"You shall have the pleasure of telling Miss Ethel what you have done for her yourself," said Mr. Dobell, the morning after Evelyn's return. "I did not go to see her last evening because I thought I would leave the business to you, my boy."

"Thank you," answered Evelyn, blushing, "but I should hardly like to be the one to announce to a proud girl like this one that I had discovered her to be the daughter of a creature like that Cuban nurse. She would not be grateful to the person who brought her such information."

"Do not tell her all the truth, then. I am certain, however, that it will be a great relief to her mind to know that the opprobrious term applied to her by her cousin Myra is not merited or true. I believe that she would care little who was her mother, if she found that she was the acknowledged child of an honest parent."

"You think I had better go, then?"

"Yes, if you have the inclination. Ah, Evelyn, don't imagine I'm blind! Men don't devote themselves to a cause, as you have to this, without interested motives."

"What are yours, then?" asked the young man, quickly.

The lawyer laughed.

"You have me there, my boy! I have no object in serving this unhappy young lady, beyond the friendly interest I take in her, for her father's sake."

"And I have no object," rejoined Evelyn, flushed and impassioned, "beyond that young lady's good. I believe that she has been wronged by her cousin, who knows perfectly well what Mr. Wainwright's real wishes were. I would give my right hand, sir, to see her restored to her proper position—to happiness and prosperity, such as she deserves—for I love her, Mr. Dobell!—love her as I love my own soul, and more, and better! But, I do not expect or wish to profit by my poor services to her. I do not wish her to be grateful—or to feel under obligations to me. If I labored for her with such an idea, I should demand a thousand times more pay than as if I charged her large sums. I want nothing from her. I work for her because I would rather be her slave than any other woman's king. I know she looks down upon me—thinks of me as a poor clerk when she thinks of me at all—and I am willing to work for her on those terms!—quite willing she should think me but a servant of yours, hired to clear up this matter."

Mr. Dobell looked at his pupil admiringly. His cheeks were flushed and his steel-blue eyes sparkled.

"He is a manly fellow—almost smart enough and good enough for Ethel," thought the lawyer. What he said was: "Go ahead, in your own way, Evelyn! You're right about it."

"Then, if you will give me her address, I will call on the lady this afternoon, Mr. Dobell."

The lawyer wrote the address on a card which he handed him.

"The locality differs from Walnut street," he observed. "Miss Ethel is supporting herself now, as you know."

"Yes, I know," murmured Evelyn, pocketing the card.

Early that afternoon the young lawyer started out to call on Mr. Dobell's client. He found the quiet and humble little court and rung the bell of one of the neat cottages. A girl of twelve came to the door and showed him into a small parlor, with an ingrain carpet, a mahogany center-table, a hair-cloth sofa, and six hair-cloth chairs set primly in their places. Albeit his heart was thumping as if it would break through his ribs, he could not help smiling at the stiff demeanor of the "best room." There was a copy of the Bible and one of the "Lady's Book" on the table; but the visitor could not beguile the time with these; his pulse ran too rapidly, his thoughts were too much absorbed in thrilling anticipation.

The little maid had taken up his card, with a few words in pencil beneath his name, saying that he had been absent in Cuba on business for Mr. Dobell, who had sent him to communicate with her. He had not long to wait.

Suddenly the bleak room blossomed into light and beauty. Ethel had entered, quietly, dressed in deep mourning as before. She was pale and cold; there was not an ornament, jewel, or flower about her, except a ring, set with a large sapphire of loveliest hue—a gift from her father on her last birthday, and worn constantly by her—which gleamed on her fair, slender left hand.

She did not even smile as she bowed to her visitor; but he—ah, he cared more for that deep light in her dark, serious eyes, than for all the laughter that ever was.

He was as cold and as serious as she, by this time.

He did not blush under her grave look; but his whole heart went out to her in tenderness and love.

But of his feelings she did not think. He had risen, and now both seated themselves, one on either side of the round mahogany table, and began to talk.

It was Evelyn, of course, who did most of the talking—generally Ethel who listened, the roses coming often into her clear-white cheeks and fading again—her eyes shining like stars—her slender fingers locking and unlocking in her emotion—her lovely figure bent toward him in rapt attention.

And he—while he told the story calmly—did not lose one expression of the divine face—one flush of the pearly cheeks, or quiver of the proudly-curved lips.

More than one slow tear gathered and fell from her long, dark lashes as she listened to the melancholy history of the man whom she had worshiped as her father: a history beginning amid roses and lilies and all the splendors of fortunate youth, to set in darkness so early in the day. When it came to the death of his young wife, Ethel broke down and sobbed as passionately as if that bright young mother had indeed been her own.

"My poor, poor father! my poor, sweet mother!" she cried: "alas, not mine, but I love them as if they were! Ah, dear, suffering father! How wicked, how unjust, how heartless I have been to accuse thee in my thoughts! To think hard things of thee, who wert mistaken, deceived, and then murdered by a knowledge of the truth?"

"Mr. Evelyn," she went on, sadly, when she had controlled her sobs and cries, "it wrings my heart to know what that noble man, whom I called father, endured; it breaks my heart to think I have accused him, and he lying helpless in his grave!"

"You had great cause to believe yourself wronged, Miss Ethel; and you have plenty of time to atone for your mistake."

He longed to take the weeping girl in his arms, to soothe and comfort her out of the store of infinite love he had for her; but this could not be, and those few cold words were all he dared venture on.

"Go on, if you please," she said humbly. "Ah, sir, I hardly see how you could have traced all this out."

"Patience and perseverance will do wonders," says the proverb," he answered, gently. "Mr. Dobell relied on me to do my best. But to proceed," and he went on with his narrative, down to the close, Ethel hanging eagerly on the words which flowed from his lips.

When he had concluded it, there was a thoughtful silence. It was broken after a few minutes by Ethel.

"Mr. Evelyn, you tell me that you suspect this girl, in the convent, in Havana, to be the one who was taken away from my parents when I was put in her place: what good reasons have you for thinking so?"

"None; it is only an impression of mine. Still, it remains fixed in my mind that this is the case. I 'feel it in my bones,' as the old-fashioned people say."

"Then she would be the true daughter of the man who brought me up—of Cyril Wainwright?"

"Certainly—if my supposition is correct."

"What induces this nurse, Olive, then, to educate the girl and dress her expensively, as you say she does?"

"I say, remorse. Some remnant of a conscience may drive her on to do this. If she should succeed in settling the girl well in life, that conscience will accuse her less—will forgive her much."

"But we, if we suspect this girl to be Cyril Wainwright's child, cannot rest quiet with matters as they are. If the blood of the man I loved flows in those veins, I cannot keep still—cannot rest—until she has her rights!"

"Noble, unselfish creature!" thought Evelyn, as his kindling eyes rested on the flushed face, vivid now with an eager desire to do justice to a rival whom she had never seen.

"My father would cry to me, out of his grave, if I let this matter pass!—I call him my father—for he was one to me, and I cannot give him up. You say this girl is beautiful?"

"The fairest creature I ever saw—save one."

"And has accomplishments?"

"All they could bestow upon her in that convent school."

"Good! She will not be awkward or ignorant—she will be fitted for the station which awaits her. Describe her to me, please."

"My observation of her is limited to a stolen view of her as she walked in the garden. She was tall, slender, of a willowy figure, with beautiful black hair and great, lustrous black eyes—a dark, clear skin, a gay, sweet laugh. She looked to me all passion and ardent life—a bright, beautiful, charming young woman."

"One would think she had fascinated you," and Ethel looked into the earnest face before her with smiling curiosity.

"No—not in that way. I was fascinated, for all time, before I saw this splendid, convent-hidden beauty."

"Oh!" ejaculated Ethel, remembering herself, and with the most trying indifference, which said as plainly as words—"I must not be expected to take an interest in this person's love affairs." "Do you think, Mr. Evelyn, in case we could prove this girl to be the true Ethel Wainwright, that there would be any difficulty in breaking the will?"

"I think not. Any court in the land—on learning that an heir, more nearly related than this niece who now holds the property—a child of the deceased—had been discovered, and in view of the second will which sudden death prevented the testator from



signing—would restore the property to the rightful heir. The deception practiced on the testator, and all the other circumstances considered, would certainly break the will."

"I do not like to disappoint Myra," mused Ethel. "She is so happy in her present possessions. But justice must be done—justice must be done though the heavens fall." We have no right to consider anything but what would have been the natural wish and will of my father, if he had known all. Do you agree with me?"

"Yes, fully."

"Then we cannot neglect doing all in our power to prove the rights of this girl. It would be as wicked to neglect this duty as to keep something which was not ours. We have no choice but to work for the truth. But I am sorry for Myra."

Evelyn gazed on the heroic girl almost in wonder. Not one feeling of envy! Not one impulse of revenge toward the cousin who had treated her so basely! Not one cry of grief or dismay because her own parentage had proved to be so base! Anxious only that justice should be done!

His love and admiration shone in his fine eyes; but she did not notice it.

"Do you think Mr. Dobell will have the patience to go any further with these inquiries?" she asked.

"I am certain he will, if you wish it."

"I do wish it," and after that her head drooped wearily into her hands and a long sigh came from her sorely-tried heart.

"Mr. Evelyn," she murmured, not looking at him, but keeping her glorious face bowed in her hands, "it hurts me dreadfully to know that my mother is a wicked woman. To find her poor, ignorant, would be nothing! I should still try hard to love her, because she is my mother. But so bad, so treacherous, so vile—merciful Heaven! I cannot love a woman like that! I hope I shall be spared ever looking upon her. It would kill me to have her come to me and call me her child!"

"And yet, in one view, it is a great relief to know that I—that I am not—"

"I understand you," he said, quietly, seeing the crimson stealing up to the roots of her hair. "Even if you were that, it could not make you different from what you are—a stainless lily, grown up pure and sweet and holy, out of the dirt of the earth. Do you imagine, Miss Ethel, that any one worthy to be called your friend has changed his sentiments toward you because of this chance of your birth?"

"I don't know—oh, yes! yes! yes!"

"You are thinking of that scoundrel, John Garwell!" exclaimed the young lawyer, starting up in sudden passion. "A man not worthy to look at you—speak to you! A million such friends might desert you and you be the richer with each loss."

Ethel raised her head and looked at him, surprised at the heat and fury of his words. It was his turn, then, to blush and hang down his head.

"Forgive me," he murmured, "for speaking so. It is none of my business—I know that. But, the baseness of that man is incomprehensible to a pure soul like yours. Do you know that he had the shamelessness to draw out of the bank \$18,000 of Myra's money?—that she gave it to him to pay his debts and he took it? It is the town's talk!"

"Yes, I knew it. He is a very mean person, I know. Do not imagine that I regret breaking friendship with that gambler and robber, John Garwell. I am only grieved that Myra is so infatuated with him."

Evelyn's heart beat high at these words of scorn. "What is done should be done quickly," he added, after a moment, "or, between them, they will squander a large share of the poor girl's inheritance."

"You have been so wise, so successful—will you go to Cuba again, Mr. Evelyn? I hope Mr. Dobell will send you."

"I am quite sure he will, Miss Ethel. Mr. Dobell will call on you this evening. As for me, I am only a subordinate, but I go heart and soul into this business."

"Thank you," and Ethel held out her hand to him as he moved to the door.

One instant the satin palm touched his, and then Webster Evelyn was out in the little brick-paved court, looking about him in a dazed way, fairly dizzy with the joy of her having smiled on him.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### A MADCAP GIRL.

It was not more than a week after Evelyn's return and interview with Ethel that he was surprised by seeing in the papers that the "Mohawk" had steamed into Norfolk.

"Of course that love-smitten boy will rush up to Philadelphia as fast as the train will carry him. I see the ship has come in for repairs, consequently he is likely to have a long leave of absence. Poor fellow! I wish there was better news for him! I feel quite sure that I ought to tell him, and the girl's relatives, too, about the person I met that very evening of Coralie Clyde's disappearance. I'm afraid the poor thing threw herself in the river—I'm sure I would if I were a woman and had to choose between that and marrying John Garwell! I must see young Leigh before I am off for Cuba again, which will be next week. It is curious that he, too, should have been looking up a family in Cuba! But, strange things happen in this world. Perhaps he will fall in love with that splendid convent-beauty if he gives poor Coralie up for lost? Supposing this girl were the real Ethel, how would we all like this handsome cadet to marry her? Well, he is young and poor, but he seems honest and brave. He must let my Ethel alone, that is all!"

From the conclusion of this soliloquy it would appear that the young lawyer was beginning to raise a

ladder to the heaven of his hope, just because the young lady had given him her hand to hold a moment at parting, in token of her gratitude.

We fear Ethel, proud and reserved, would have been indignant had she dreamed of the state of her advocate's feelings. Evelyn was roused out of his speculations by a quick knock on the office door, followed by the immediate advent of a young fellow so audaciously handsome in his youth and grace and cadet uniform that the grave law student felt a pang of envy.

"Hallo, Evelyn!" was the breezy greeting of Bertram Leigh, as he doffed his cap, and the pale March sunshine falling through the dusty window brightened his golden curls.

"Hallo, Cadet Leigh," responded Evelyn, and the two shook hands.

Mr. Dobell was considerably absent and they sat down to a confidential chat.

"I've come to look for her, myself," announced Bertram.

"God grant you may find her!" exclaimed Evelyn. "Leigh, I must tell you of an adventure I had the night of Miss Clyde's disappearance—not more than two hours after she left the house, in fact," and he went on and described the girl he had seen in the water-proof cloak, her suspicious acts, and what he said to her. "I am afraid she went back and threw herself in the river."

"A joyful flash came to Bertram's blue eyes."

"She is not the girl to do such a thing. Her temperament is too elastic for her ever to commit suicide. Mr. Evelyn, you don't know what a load you remove from my heart! I have feared abduction—that fear has almost killed me! But if Coralie ran away purposely, then—she is all right! I am sure of it! You say she carried a small bag?"

"Yes, like a ladies' shopping bag."

"Does that look like suicide?" Would she want her brushes and combs, her collars and cuffs and her pretty frilled night-dress, down at the bottom of the river? And you, a lawyer! I am ashamed of you!" cried Bertram, gleefully tossing his cap to the ceiling and catching it.

"I hope you are right, Leigh; but it is very strange the detectives never get any clew to her."

"Detectives be hanged! Love is the only detective worth his wages! Now, let me see, I'll lay you a wager, a hundred to one, that she took the New York train at the Germantown Station, and went, as straight as the railroads could carry her to her father's relatives in the good old Nutmeg State."

"How did you know she had relatives in Connecticut?"

"Because she told me. We had a long talk about them, one day, in the hospital. Coralie confided to me that she was a birthright member of the Quaker Church, but that she thought the sect too strict and ungrateful to God for the beautiful and good things which they would not receive from His hand. She said that she often regretted that she had not been brought up by her father's friends instead of her mother's; not that she failed in love to her kind aunts, but that she was a wild creature who couldn't bear the sober ways of the Quakers, and had always longed for a life on sea and shore—on the sands amid rotting hulks of vessels, or dancing over the green waves on a white-sailed bird of a vessel. Those were her words—I remember them well. She said that many of her father's folks were seafaring people—that she was bewitched to live at Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard. She's in that vicinity now, more than as likely as not—perhaps secure from detection in the little cabin of some of her uncle's coasting vessels. If there's anything in the world would delight that madcap girl it would be such adventures as those. She avowed to me that she was her father over again, and nothing kept her from the sea until he met his death on it. You know what I must have told her in return!—that I was awfully glad to hear her tastes were in that direction, since I was doomed to spend a large part of my life on ship-board; and that I should make it my duty to become an admiral as soon as possible so that I might fetch her to live in a gorgeous cabin, all crimson-velvet and gold, while I paced the quarter-deck with a gold band about my cap," and the handsome fellow laughed merrily, for he really had persuaded himself that Coralie Clyde had been changed into a pretty fisher-girl somewhere on the New England shore.

"You know she cut me before I left?" he asked, suddenly becoming very grave and looking keenly at Evelyn.

"No!"

"Well, she did. At least those dove-colored aunts of hers told me she had repented of her flirtation with me."

The aunts told you so? Then don't believe it, Bertram. Not that I suppose those most respectable ladies would tell falsehoods—far from it!—but that prudence comes with years, and they may have thought it wise to break off an affair which they considered as only a passing fancy of both."

"I believe you are right now, Evelyn! Lawyers are not always on the wrong track after all! The dear, dear little girl did seem to love me. By the manes of Nelson! if I thought she and I had been tricked by those meddlers I would—would go and throw it in their faces! And I wouldn't leave a stone unturned, or a State in the Union unsearched until I had found my sweet girl and married her out of hand, or done something equally rash. Good-by, Evelyn for a few hours. I've got something to tell you about myself—a discovery I made the day after you left Cuba—but I can't stop now. I'm going to browbeat those aunts. Oh, I'm not afraid of them."

"Come to my room this evening, Leigh; here's the number."

"All right: I'll be on hand at eight o'clock."

The bleak winds of early March were whistling dolefully through the fashionable avenue on which their grand residence stood, as the Misses Featherflight, that day, after an early luncheon, sat in their handsome back parlor, silently hemming on some plain sewing which they were doing for the poor. Their occupation was commendable, but they did not seem at peace. There was a streak of white in Miss Priscilla's black hair which had not been there last summer; and Miss Charity had got into a habit of drawing long sighs. The large, pleasant house was painfully still. George walked about on tip-toe and spoke in a whisper nowadays as if some one was lying dead up-stairs.

Nothing ever got out of order; there was very little for any one to do. Cook did not have the capricious tastes of a fault-finding, rosy-cheeked young lady to consult; her two mistresses scarcely ate anything and did not mind it if it was the same thing every day. The girl who served as chambermaid and laundress had no tucked and ruffled white petticoats, no flounced muslin dresses to do up—no clothes to pick up from the carpet in Miss Coralie's room and shake and hang up; George had no books or slates to take out of the hall, or errands to the pastry-shops half a dozen times a day.

There was no loud caroling here and there, all over the house. Miss Charity had no longer qualms of conscience because she had influenced Priscilla about getting the piano; that wicked instrument was now closed and quiet as the grave.

Everything was orderly, peaceful, neat, silent. Yet the two elderly ladies did not seem quite happy. There was a ghost—the pale ghost of what had once been a gay, troublesome, willful, loving child—fitting everywhere.

They saw it by the basket of fancy-work, and sitting on the piano-stool, and standing in the sunshine by the canary's cage.

Miss Priscilla was troubled by a memory of a deceit she had practiced between two young, innocent creatures. She had falsified matters—for what benefit? Why, to force a pure maiden into wedlock with a man of whom she now began to hear shocking stories which she could not refute.

Priscilla Featherflight was far from being at peace with that troublesome monitor, her conscience. It had never before been so restless, so insubordinate, so exacting.

As they sat, and sewed, and sighed, and thought, the bell rung, making them start and drop their work. They always started, now, when the bell rung.

Presently George came in with a card, which Miss Priscilla read aloud—"Bertram Leigh, U. S. N."—and then looked at Charity, who stared at her in the same helpless way.

"We don't want to see him, Charity?"

"Oh, sister, we must. He may bring us news of our niece!"

A crimson flush had come over the pale face of the elder sister; she dreaded to see this young gentleman because she had deceived him—and also, oh, contradictory nature of ours! because if he had influenced Coralie to go away she could not forgive him.

"We will see him," she at last said, slowly, and George disappeared to return with the handsome and ungrateful, the depraved, calculating monster who had got run over and carried to the hospital on purpose to entangle the sympathies of their niece that he might make love to her, marry her, and step into a fortune!

Cadet Leigh did not look very wicked as he stood gravely and modestly before them, cap in hand, looking at them with his frank blue eyes and blushing ingenuously.

"Take a chair, if thee is disposed," said Priscilla, coldly.

The cadet thanked her and took a seat.

"What is thy errand with us, young man?"

"I came to learn if you have any tidings—of Miss Clyde?"

"None whatever—has thee any?" asked Miss Featherflight, fixing a searching glance full in his eyes.

"No, oh, no! Madam, I hope you do not do me the injustice to suspect me of having any thing to do with her—with Miss Clyde's disappearance? I was far from here, on a Government ship, and could have known nothing of it at the time. We had not even corresponded since—since you made me believe, madam, that your niece did not care for me. Oh, shame! hypocrites and worldly that ye are, to separate hearts true and fond as ours, because I was poor, and try to force my darling into a life with that unprincipled scoundrel, because he was the fashion, and had a father as rich as yourselves! It was a wicked thing to do, even if done by those who make no profession of living above the world, and you are justly punished for it."

"How dares thee!" began Priscilla, but she burst into tears, and could not finish her indignant protest.

"Forgive me!" cried Bertram, with sudden humility. "I have no right to speak so to a lady. Please forgive me! I think that you did what you considered was for the best."

"I did—I did," moaned Priscilla. "I would not do it again! That is, I have learned since that my old friend's son is a bad young man. Coralie should not marry him now, were she here. Nevertheless," she added, wiping her eyes and looking at Bertram sharply, "I mean thee to understand that thy conduct was not proper, and that we give thee no encouragement to thrust thy acquaintance upon us."

"A hint is as good as a kick, madam," smiled the cadet. "I will take myself off immediately. But first, let me say why I called on you. It was to suggest the possibility of your niece having taken



refuge with her father's friends, and coaxed them not to betray her hiding-place. She may be at sea with some of her uncles. I have been told that a gentleman tracked a young lady, resembling Miss Clyde, across the river and into a car running to the Germantown Junction. I thought this news might be a comfort to you," rising and hesitating a moment before concluding—"I came to you, fairly, to ask for the honor of your acquaintance. Since you choose to deny me a fair chance I warn you that I'm going to search for Coralie, and if I find her shall do all I can to coax her to a foolish and hasty marriage. Then she will be *mine*; and as she has enough property to live on, I can leave her to pursue my course until I am able to claim her. Good-morning."

"Truly, thee has assurance!" remarked Miss Charity, while the elder sister only glared after the retreating cadet.

As George opened the door for Bertram's exit, the postman ran up the steps with a letter for "Miss Priscilla Featherflight." The faithful fellow could not restrain a cry, but he clapped the door in the visitor's face, first, and then leaned against it, quite faint, while his face had turned from its mulatto hue to a sickly gray.

"Golly, dat's Miss Coralie's hand-write!" he murmured.

As soon as he recovered himself he put it on a salver, tapped at the back-parlor door, bearing in the missive with an excited air which at once brought Miss Featherflight out of her spasm of indignation.

She gave a scream when she saw the handwriting, and snatched at the letter, while Charity rushed up, alarmed—

"What is it, sister?"

"Coralie! Coralie!"

"A letter?"

"Yes, from her! Oh, open it, sister; my hand shakes so."

"It is postmarked *Nantucket*," cried Charity. "I believe that cadet was right. Here it is, sister! Shall I read it?"

"Oh, yes, yes," whimpered Priscilla, trembling and crying; so Charity, in a quivering voice, read:

"ON BOARD THE SCHOONER LADYBIRD,  
March 1st, 187—.

"MY DEAR, DEAR, DARLING AUNTIES:

"I ought to have written to you long ago, but I was afraid you would come after me, so I didn't. Now if you will be good and let me alone for the present I will promise to come back in six weeks—say, the middle of April. I hear that Mr. Garwell will be married by that time, so I shall be safe to come home. You can't imagine how I wish to see you both! I felt dreadfully about keeping you in suspense; but truly and solemnly, my darling aunties, I believe it was better to do this than to be made wretched myself for all the long years of my life—don't you?"

"You see I knew Mr. Garwell was a *bad man*. I hope you are convinced of it, too, by this time. Since he can marry so soon, his affections could not have suffered much."

"Dear aunties, please put away my wedding dresses and wreaths and vails and things; they may come good yet, before they are entirely out of style."

"Put away my bridal dresses—

Fold my pretty things with care,

I am almost sure to need them—

When I do, they will be there!

"There! that's almost as good as the *Ledger's*. You can't imagine what a world of fun I'm having! And I'm as safe as if under your own care—indeed I am, so please don't worry."

"Oh, the seal! the seal! the open sea."

Uncle Abram's is a beautiful vessel; I'm most free of my ears, it is true, just now, but it will soon be perfectly delightful."

"Now, my dear aunts, I want you to be all ready to forgive me when I get home. I'll be good and obedient for a long time, if you will. I know I've been naughty, but then—there was a reason. With a hundred kisses, your penitent niece,

"CORALIE."

There was a smothered sound of blubbering just outside the door, and as the two ladies looked up with tear-dimmed eyes, they saw George stealing off with his handkerchief to his nose. He had taken the liberty of listening, for he could not help it. His heart was bursting to know what had become of the "young missus."

But, after George had blown his nose and wiped his eyes a number of times he began to snicker in the vestibule:

"Fore de Lawd," he muttered, "my young missy too much fur dem elderly Quaker cresses. Dey's berry nice—berry nice ladies!—an' dey's got religion, suah! but I wouldn't give one hair o' young missy's head fur both of 'em! Bress her purty face! I'm tickled to hear she's havin' lots o' fun! I reckon dey won't persevere wid her lub affairs, *next time*! Lawd! ef dey gets her back again dey'll be right glad to let her 'tend to her own affairs."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE HAUNTED BOUDOIR.

EVERYTHING prospered with soft little Myra. She was rich, she was courted, she was soon to be married to the man she coveted, she had everything her own way—yet she was sorely persecuted, and in a manner and through an instrument against which she could make no defense.

That intrusive but invisible thing which called itself the spirit of her dead uncle never left her in perfect peace.

It followed her about, laughing, sneering, taunting, threatening—but it never spoke to her in the

presence of others, with the exception of her lover. When those two were alone together the ghostly voice took its greatest liberties.

Of course John laughed off its threats and ridiculed the timidity of his ladylove; but Myra could not consider this unseen tormentor in the light of an amusement. Every day she grew thinner and paler, and her great blue eyes wore a startled look. Weeks had glided on until the March sun was shining out between swift-moving white clouds; and Myra felt that—six months having now passed since her uncle's death—she could make no longer sacrifices to appearances. She had always been nervous, and now fear was making life a burden to her.

Indeed, she did suffer strange experiences every day. She tried bravely not to betray alarm before the servants; but they got a hint that there was something wrong about the house—that it was haunted—and she was frequently changing, since, as soon as one of these ignorant creatures got the notion in his or her head, warning was immediately given.

During this period her French maid, Lizette, was a great comfort to her. The girl declared herself willing to face any number of ghosts; and when her young mistress could not sleep at night for fear, she would keep herself awake for hours, brushing Myra's long, light hair, or patting her hands, or telling her funny little French stories, until she was coaxed into slumber.

If it had not been for Lizette the heiress would have found her experience insupportable.

"I shall sell this house, Lizette," said Myra, one day, "as soon after I am married as possible. I will not stay in it an hour after the wedding. The day is fixed for that—the tenth of April. I was glad enough to have Mr. Garwell urge me to shorten the time of our engagement, for I am worn out with this thing. I am afraid I shall make a woebegone bride, with these pale cheeks and this thin figure, to say nothing of these shadows under my eyes," and she looked at herself in the long mirror with some discontent. "But, Lizette, I have decided to be married in white, and to have no mourning in my new dresses. It would bring me ill-luck to have my *trousseau* made up in mourning—don't you think so? I chose my wedding-dress yesterday, and it is now in the hands of Madame W—, who will do it justice, I think; there was not time to give the order in Paris. The front will be of pearl satin, and the train of ivory brocade, with oceans of Venetian point for trimmings." As the bride-expectant ran on with her description she crossed the chamber and entered the little dressing-room out of it.

No sooner had she gone in than she gave a sharp scream.

"What is it?" cried Lizette, running to her.

Her mistress was trembling and almost in hysterics. "Look, look, Lizette. The water in the basin has turned to blood!" and she pointed to the basin into which she had no more than immersed the tips of her fingers than it had changed, before her very eyes, to a deep red which certainly looked like blood.

As the two looked at it the ghostly voice, which had never spoken before Lizette until then, floated over their heads:

"*Thou, Myra, hast crushed thy cousin's heart and stolen thy cousin's portion—wash, therefore, in blood.*"

Hearing these words, Myra threw up her hands and would have fallen to the floor had not the maid caught her in her arms, and sprinkled her face with water from the faucet—not the red water in the bowl.

"Lizette, I wish it were the tenth of April to-day," moaned her young mistress, as she came out of the faint; "this thing is dreadful."

"What did the spirit mean by saying—" here the girl hesitated.

"That I 'had stolen my cousin's portion.' A vile slander, Lizette, no matter who or what proclaimed it. All that I have was left me by my uncle—nobody ever sought to contest the will. Why should I give up what is mine?"

"*For the sake of thy own peace of mind.*"

Again that haunting, invisible tormentor!

"Ah, I would rather be as dependent as I was before than to lead this life any longer! Lizette, take me out of this room. It is only here, or in the boudoir below, that I hear that voice. Come—come!"

"*Cast off that gambler who does not love thee—return to thy cousin that of which thou hast robbed her—and thou shalt be happy.*"

"Never!" exclaimed Myra, excitedly, at last roused to the desperation of retorting on this ghostly adviser. "That girl is no cousin of mine—in her blood is the taint of slavery, and the Wainwright money shall never go to a creature whose veins run impure streams."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the ghost, derisively.

"Come, Lizette, come away!" and the mistress dragged the maid after her.

"What do you think of this?" she asked, when in the chamber, across the corridor.

"Mademoiselle," answered the French girl, "*Je le pense tres mysterieux.*"

"But Mr. Garwell says it is all trickery."

"Is there any one in your household who could or would be guilty of it, mademoiselle?"

"Ah, there it is, Lizette! Nearly all the servants in the house have been changed since this thing began; besides, who knows the secrets of our family?"

The French girl shook her pretty head and looked puzzled; evidently the matter was too deep for her.

"You go bring me my dress and jewel-casket, Lizette; it is time to dress for dinner. I will not enter that chamber again, if I can help it."

While Lizette was assisting at the elaborate toilet, word came that the foreign woman wanted to see the mistress.

"Tell her Olive, and she will comprehend," was the message she sent, miss," said the servant.

"Very well, I will be down. And remember, while she remains I am at home to no one else. So, she is back quickly," she muttered to herself.

Lizette clasped the necklace about her white neck, pinned the scintillating butterfly in her fair hair, gave her her fan and handkerchief, and Myra, with a beating heart and a flush growing in her cheeks, went down to meet this visitor, to whom she always gave a private audience.

The woman had gone, according to her former custom, to the boudoir.

A long interview followed, and then the Cuban went away. When she was gone Myra came upstairs to the room in which Lizette sat sewing; and the girl, glancing up, saw that her cheeks were as red as roses and her eyes bright as stars, while a strange excitement seemed to possess her which prevented her sitting down or resting one minute.

Presently it grew dark, but she still walked restlessly, until pausing at the window, she cried to herself, "There's John!" and ran down to meet him.

John came to dinner every evening. There was rarely other company, except a "companion"—a quiet, deaf lady, who could hear nothing unless it was shouted at her, and who had been engaged to play propriety by the young hostess.

When the dinner on this particular evening had been discussed, the lovers retired to the drawing-room while the companion took her crocheting to the library across the hall. Myra was anxious to be alone with John, for she had something to tell him which she had often longed to do, but had not had the liberty until now—something which she knew would be sure to put him in high spirits.

As they began, after a habit of theirs, to walk up and down, arm-in-arm, John, when he came to the boudoir door, opened that and extended the field of their promenade.

"You are a little afraid of this pretty room, I believe, fairy; but we will take it in the course of our exercise. Now, little one, what is it you have to tell me which is so important?"

"I shall speak in a whisper, John dear, for I am certain that these walls have ears whether any others ever had or not. Well, the Cuban woman, is back here. I had a long talk with her to-day."

"Indeed! What new revelation did she make?"

He spoke with restrained eagerness.

"She fully confirmed a statement she made me when she was here before. I have not spoken of it to you because I was not certain that I could entirely trust her. She is coming back here to-night—it is almost time for her now; and she will explain to you, at my request, all that she has explained to me. I thought you would understand and enjoy it more from her lips. She is a strange creature; she has done things not quite right; but since they all accrue to our advantage, why should we quarrel with her?"

"I never quarrel with my bread-and-butter," remarked John Garwell, with an unpleasant smile. "I shall not find fault, if she brings us good news."

"She does—magnificent news! There she is, now!" as a voice was heard in the hall.

Olive, the Cuban, walked straight into the boudoir, although the footman had made an effort to show her into the drawing-room.

"It is better she should remain there, in case of our being interrupted," said John, and the two went in and closed the doors.

John was conscious of a pair of piercing eyes which made him strangely uneasy, they seemed to look so keenly into his very heart—and John's heart was one which could not bear close inspection. He saw a woman who must once have been very handsome; the brilliancy of her eyes was remarkable; and her dark smooth skin must once have boasted rich tints. Her figure was still tall and fine, and she bore herself with a certain majesty which conveyed an idea of power.

Garwell spoke to her with sufficient deference, for he had too much cunning not to wish to please her.

"I have sold my information to this lady," she said to him, after some preliminary conversation, "for a sum which will answer my purpose for a long time. At her request I will give you a few leading facts, so that you may see just how she stands in this matter of property. She is like to have told you what I told her on our first interview, and which explains Cyril Wainwright's will. That will was made after a visit I paid him not long before he died. To be as brief as possible, the lady he married had a sister, who had fancied that he was in love with her; and when she found it was her young sister, she cherished in her bosom a fury of jealousy. She married a man she didn't like, to be the less suspected in her real feelings. She could not live unless she could be revenged. Well, Mrs. Cyril Wainwright had a son, and the child died. I shall not tell you how. Afterward she had a daughter; and as I gave birth to a daughter, also on the previous night—though it was pretended at first to be a boy and not to have come till afterward, for certain reasons—I was bribed, for a large sum, by Donna Marie, the jealous sister, to put my child in the place of the little heiress, and take hers to be brought up in a low condition, as my child would be likely to be brought up. I did it—I exchanged the children."

"Well, after a few years, the true child of Cyril Wainwright died, and I kept still, and said nothing. He had then been gone from Cuba for three years. I let things go on, and Donna Marie always made me presents and paid me well. But I wanted to have my revenge, too—fur to tell you the truth I was in love with the gentleman, too, before he was married, and showed my fondness for him, plain enough; but he scolded me fur it, and told me I wasn't a good girl to act so, and so I was dreadfully angry with him—for we Southern women have just awful tempers, and that's the truth."

"So, when his child, that wasn't his at all, grewed



up to be a fine young lady, I came on to see her, though I didn't care much for her after all that time—and to have my revenge by telling him he'd brought up my daughter."

Here she stopped to laugh, and John patted his hands softly together, and laughed, too.

"A good joke! By George, a splendid joke!" he murmured.

"So that accounts for the will; and I'm sure this pretty young lady ought to be much obliged to me! But there's more behind. You see, I sha'n't say a word about how Mrs. Wainwright came to die so suddenly; but this is so—when Donna Marie, about three years ago, came to her death-bed, she was frightfully troubled in her mind. She sent for me, and gave me the keeping of a will she had made, leaving all her property to the man she had loved, and done so much mischief to—to him, and his heirs, forever, the will read; and it was all duly signed and I witnessed it; and she made me swear to come to the United States and give it to Cyril Wainwright. I did give it to him that day, but he threw it in my face, and so I picked it up again and took it away. It was a handsome fortune to leave, I can tell you, sir," looking keenly at young Garwell, with a subtle smile. "A handsome fortune!—for Donna Marie's husband had died first and left her all; and Mr. Yosedo and his other daughter were dead; so that she had their portions as well as her own—altogether, I'm positive there's plantations and money worth nearly a million now, notwithstanding the state of the country. Now, I've given up that will of Donna Marie's to this young lady for the sum of twenty thousand dollars. You don't call that dear, young gentleman, do you? Consider, she never would have known about it! For the Donna's husband's relatives think there was no will made; and a dozen of them have divided up the property between them. This young lady here is the real heir. All you have to do is to extend your wedding trip to Cuba, produce the will, and possess your estates there."

"Nothing could be clearer!" exclaimed John Garwell, exultingly. "Myra, I trust you have that valuable document in a safe place?"

"It is locked up in the secretary where uncle kept his papers. Perhaps I had better send it to our safe in the vaults of the bank, to-morrow?"

At that instant, before John could reply, that mocking, ghostly laugh floated about over their heads.

The Cuban looked up in alarm and surprise.

"Ha! ha! hi!" "Ha! hi! ha!"

"What was that?" asked Olive, turning pale.

"Nothing—nothing," and Myra also lost color.

"Come in the drawing-room," said John; "some of the servants are amusing themselves. Myra, you should be more strict with them."

But before they left the room the voice arrested them:

"Woman, thou hast lied. Of what avail are falsehoods in the awful presence of the disembodied soul? I, Cyril Wainwright, charge thee with thy lies. Ay! tremble—quake to the bottom of thy guilty heart! There is a power at work which shall overthrow thee and thy revenge. Hidden things shall come to light. Beware, lest thou die without confession. Let the priest shrive thee while there is yet time. And ye, cruel ones, who would wrong the innocent, your triumph shall be brief!"

"Oh, Jesu! Oh, Mary, Mother of God!" murmured the Cuban, looking wildly about her.

"Come in here!" repeated Garwell, dragging her out of the haunted boudoir. "This is all nonsense!"

"If I could find out the author of it, I'd take it out of his hide. Don't mind it, Olive!"

But he was a little shaken himself; and the woman would not remain a moment longer in the house, but went away, crossing herself and muttering.

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### WAS IT LOVE?

A GREAT dread, in those days, was ever in Ethel's mind, the dread that her mother might take a fancy to make her acquaintance—perhaps claim from her the duties and service of a daughter.

In view of such a possibility, her present life appeared to be a heaven of calm security. She was not unhappy—aside from this horrible fear which often paled her cheeks.

Mr. Wainwright always had been fondly proud of Ethel's mental superiority to many girls in her circle. Petted, flattered, beautiful, it would hardly have been strange if she had given herself unreservedly to soci-ty; but it had never been so with Ethel. She had resources in her own mind which made her independent of the crowd of friends and lovers who flattered about her.

Now, in the days of her adversity, she used these resources not only to earn money to pay for her humble living, but as a pleasant way of spending the days no longer besieged by throngs of idle flatterers. Her health was splendid. Just to walk abroad in the fresh morning air was a delight; she would come in with elastic step and sparkling eyes—put away her simple hat, trimmed with a wreath of daisies manufactured by her skillful fingers—and sit down to her lovely flower-painting, or that almost as exquisite needle painting in which she excelled, and for which she had quite a market.

One of these pieces of embroidery she intended to have exhibited as a work of art at the May exhibition at the Academy. It represented the "blessed damozel" of Rossetti's poetry, leaning from heaven, and so delicately were her silken flosses shaded, and so artistic was the design—made by herself—that it was truly a picture.

She no longer wept in secret over the baseness of John Garwell; in place of tears came a song of gladness because she had escaped a life with him—she wondered now how she could have been so deceived.

Ethel turned from men, now; she did not look forward to marriage, but calmly planned to fill her days

with work, which suited her tastes and abilities. To be able to hire a good piano for her room, and to buy all the new books and magazines she wanted, was the present height of her ambition. Her room in that small cottage was somewhat bare and low; but she had a little bedroom opening out of it, and, week by week, as she could spare the time, she decorated the chamber with her own drawings. The company of her old-time nursery-governess at meals was formal and meager, but not coarse; the two children were nice little creatures who looked up to her as something glorious, good and wonderful; and this was nearly all the society she had. One or two of her old mates she allowed to visit her. Sometimes Mr. Dobell dropped in for an hour. Not an exciting life by any means.

Mr. Evelyn was again in Cuba on her affairs. The only tolerably regular caller she had was the young cadet, Bertram Leigh.

And how he came to be a frequent caller she hardly understood. Mr. Evelyn had told her about this young fellow's search for parents, and this, alone, had deeply enlisted her sympathies; then he had gone on further to say Coralie Clyde had run away on account of this handsome cadet—that they had become lovers in consequence of Leigh saving her life at the peril of his own; so she had fancied she should like to know him; and Evelyn had brought and introduced the youth before her (Evelyn) departed on his second mission to Cuba.

Did the young lawyer not reflect that it might seriously endanger his own cause to do this? Whether he did or not he made no excuses, but brought Bertram to see her the evening before he himself sailed.

And the cadet had been charmed by the beautiful girl, so noble and so cheerful in her new sphere. He came often and often, so that the children learned to peep out of their mother's sitting-room and speak to him when they heard his peculiar ring. Their grave mother, too, began to smile, and have thoughts to herself about the frequency of his visits, and to hope, for Miss Ethel's sake, that her suspicions would prove correct.

As for Ethel, if the young gentleman admired her, she returned the admiration without reserve.

Bertram's visits were like bursts of sunshine in upon the gray pleasantness of her days. He was gay; he was witty, or at least, full of fun; he was extremely handsome; he was interesting, inasmuch as he was a youth without name or family; he had engaging manners; was full of spirit and ambition.

His bright face and sunny hair ornamented Ethel's 'den' as none other of her pictures did. She fell into the habit of looking for him. If he did not come for two or three days, she missed him more than she would like to confess.

Evelyn, soberly and faithfully working in her cause, would have felt a pang strike to his heart like a knife, could he have seen the two together, so gay, so confidential.

"I'm getting to be immensely fond of you, Miss Ethel," the cadet declared to her once, after a month's acquaintance.

"Have a care, sir!" she cried, merrily. "Remember what the news is about Coralie!"

"Ay! The dove-colored ladies did not want me to get hold of that—did they?" and he laughed merrily. "How did you happen to hear about the letter, Miss Ethel?"

"Oh, a little bird told me!"

"Thanks to the little bird, then! Only two weeks more to the fifteenth of April! What a witch Coralie is, isn't she? You are better than she in many respects—you have more—dignity."

"I am older, lieutenant—remember that!"

"Don't lieutenant me yet awhile, please! But I'm bound to be an admiral, some day."

"I shall be disappointed if you are not."

"Do you take so much interest in me, then?"

"More than I have ever taken in any young gentleman before!"

"I can't tell you how happy that makes me," said Bertram, bowing elaborately over her hand, which he had seized, and kissing it.

"How did you and Coralie get in love so soon?"

"Oh, it don't take long! It's like falling in water. You go in, head and ears, all at once."

"Indeed! Is the sensation pleasant?"

"First there is a murmur in your ears—you feel suffocated—and then you float about deliciously, as if you were swimming on a bed of down."

"I see you understand drowning."

"Yes—I was almost gone once, last summer."

"Really? how did it happen?"

"Oh, a sailor was knocked overboard; and as he was stunned by the blow, he could not save himself; so I jumped in after him. He had gone down so deep, I couldn't find him, and I stayed under the water a good while. Consequences, we both had to be fished out."

"Don't do it again, my dear cadet!"

"I won't—unless there is a similar need. Let me see, this is the third of April?"

"Yes, and Myra is to be married on the tenth; there are the cards in that basket."

"Are you going to the wedding?"

"I may go to the church, but I shall not appear at the house."

"And on the fifteenth, my little Quakeress is coming home!"

"Are you glad?"

"I don't know. That will be according to how she receives me. She may prove false, who knows—"

"Trust her not, she is fooling thee!"

Beware, beware!"

she is such a madcap!"

"That kind of a girl makes a splendid wife."

"If I ever marry her, we shall have to elope. Her aunts don't fancy me, you know."

"Elope, then, and I will give you my blessing—seeing neither of you have parents to do it."

"Miss Ethel, I really do feel an uncommon affection for you."

"It is returned. Who is ringing the bell, I wonder?"

"If any one for you, I'm going."

"No, sit still. I seldom have any visitor."

But, presently, a light tap on the door announced that this one was for her, at least. Ethel went to the door and opened it, while the cadet stood, cap in hand, ready to take his leave.

"Ah, Lizette, how do you do?" said Ethel, warmly, as the visitor stepped into the room.

"Who the deuce is that?" thought Bertram, as, after saying good-evening, he went away with a light step. "Must be that pretty French girl Miss Ethel told me about. She was immensely pretty, too; and how full of mischief her eyes were!"

"If I were not so dead in love with Coralie, I should almost imagine myself smitten by this Ethel!" he confessed, as he walked briskly on. "What a sweet, lovely, glorious girl she is! I should hardly know how to fool away the tedious time until the fifteenth, if she were not so friendly to me."

But his friend was glad he had taken himself off, this time. She had an engagement to go out with Lizette. It was still very early in the evening; and in that quiet part of the city the two girls were not afraid to go out together; so they soon started.

Lizette had something hidden under her cloak which she occasionally stole a look at, always bursting into a suppressed laugh as she did so. Ethel, on the other hand, was deeply agitated; she sometimes paused in her walk, trembled, and seemed to wish to turn back; but the French girl urged her on.

"All is fair in love and war!" assumed Lizette.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

##### THE CUBAN GIRL.

THAT same evening a middle-aged and a young woman were talking together in a first floor front parlor which they had recently rented, in a decent house in an obscure neighborhood of the city. Any curious passer-by could have peeped in at them, had he so desired, for the solid wooden blinds, so popular in the Quaker city, were not closed, nor even the lace curtains dropped over the windows.

In fact, the two Southern women who occupied the place were so accustomed to open windows, and galleries—the life in public plazas and promenades—that they never thought to shut out from observation the pretty parlor in which they were.

One of them, the younger, was a creature born for the sole purpose, one would think, of being beautiful and being admired. She reclined, in an indolent attitude, on a sort of couch which served in place of a sofa. She was dressed in one of those lovely robes which are manufactured only in the East Indies—a diaphanous white muslin into which was woven an elaborate tracery of gold threads. Her thick, silken black hair was twisted about her head in a coronet of heavy braids and flashed at every turn of the graceful neck with the jewels which sprinkled it.

Her eyes were dark, liquid and dreamy—they smiled just then with the thoughts she was idly thinking, but they were of that slumberous sort which at times flash with the lightnings of anger and jealousy. Her skin was smooth and rich as velvet, very dark and pale, with a dash of scarlet in lips and cheeks. Her arms were circled with band after band of gold and gems; her hands were loaded with rings; the belt about her slender waist was of gold, with a jeweled clasp. Her lap was full of flowers—roses, cape-jasmines, carnations, lilies, which she pulled to pieces as she sat idly dreaming.

"Mother," she spoke after a while, in a voice sweet and rich, but with an impatient ring to it—"mother, when are you going to keep your promise? When you took me away from the good Sisters, and coaxed me to come to this dreary city, you promised me great things. You told me that I was heiress to a great fortune, and that I should be queen of the world, with a thousand lovers at my feet—that I could take my pick from the richest and handsomest. I'm weary of this poor, plain house—this loneliness and waiting. Come! if you do not begin to fulfill your promises, I shall run away and go back to the Sisters again."

"Do not worry, Olive! As I told you, things have not gone quite as I expected; there is some delay about proving your rights. But all will be well; very soon I shall do all that I promised."

"Mother, I do not believe you! You are deceiving me. Things have not gone as you anticipated. You are in trouble. Do you think I have no observation? On the contrary, I see everything; and I want to return to our own lovely land. I am weary—wearied! What is the use of being young and gloriously beautiful, of wearing these costly dresses you gave me, of having all the accomplishments, when I have not been spoken to by a soul since we came here save yourself and the stupid woman who gives us our meals? I wish you had brought Dolores along; even my maid would be better than no one, and sometimes she amuses me. You dress me quite as well as she does, but you are grave company, mother."

"I know it, Olive, my pretty humming-bird! That is because I am fretted about business affairs. But all will go well in a few days now."

"I wish I could think so!" sighed the beauty.

She relapsed into her dreamy languor again, while her mother continued to walk up and down the room, frowning as she thought:

"Confess, while I have yet time! Yes, that is what the voice of the dead man bade me do. I can not! Yet my soul shudders when I recall his words. Yes, the judgments of eternity will soon overtake me. Long, long ago this ill-doing of mine began. It is hard to walk backward over the thorny road of one's misdeeds!"



"Ah! how I detest that young lady who thinks I am eager to place everything in her hands! Why should I wish to benefit her? haughty, selfish, vain little cat that she is! She is caught in the trap, and she will get her pretty hand cut off, by reaching too eagerly for the bait."

"All, all, for the benefit of my darling, my beautiful one, my bird, my child! To see her at the head of all would be worth the damnation of my own soul. And I shall certainly be damned! I have seen strange sights and heard strange warnings. More than once I have seen the face of the Evil One looking in at me."

"To-morrow the grand wedding takes place! I shall go to the church, and I shall laugh in my sleeve as the priest makes those two one. They are well-matched—that is true. They will make a pretty couple! Lucifer will be somewhere about, looking on, to bless their nuptials!"

"Ah, holy Mother! I see him again! The Evil One! Satan himself! There! there! there!" she screamed, pointing toward the window in terror.

The girl bounded to her feet and looked out. "I see nothing, mother! There is nothing—no one—at the window."

"He was there—I saw him—this is the third time. Olive, I tell you, I saw him as distinctly as I see you! His face was black; his eyes were like flames, his mouth breathed smoke, his horns—"

"Mother, I am afraid of you," wailed the girl; "you must have done something wicked to be tormented as you are. Oh, mother, I beseech you, pray to be delivered from this vision! Pray to be forgiven, if you have committed a crime! If you repent and atone for your sins, Jesus will blot them out of the great Book. I do not like it in this place—let us go back to-morrow."

But the elder woman made no answer. She was still under the spell of terror which had grasped her when her eyes fell on that frightful face which mocked her at the window. And like a knife entering her heart fell those words of the beautiful being she adored:

"Mother, I am afraid of you!"

There had, indeed, appeared at the window a terrifying apparition. As her eyes had fallen on it by chance she had seen such a visitant as she described, leering in at her, but who, at her first cry of alarm, had disappeared. Her terror was not feigned.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WHO CAME TO THE WEDDING.

THE tenth of April was a fair, sunny day, more like May than May's tearful predecessor.

Out in the country were the smell of violets and the budding of tender, pale-green leaves, fleecy clouds and sparkling streams. There were violets in the city, too; and thousands of roses and delicate flowers which could not yet bear the breath of the open air. A certain house and certain church were full of them.

For this was Myra Wainwright's wedding day! The house from which had come the black funeral procession, seven months before, was, this day, to send forth the white bridal train.

The wedding was to be in church; there was to be no reception afterward, on account of her uncle's recent death, and Myra was a devoted observer of appearances; but the great mansion was dressed in costly flowers and a table was set for such few intimate friends as were invited to sup, after the ceremony, with the bride and bridegroom.

Myra had decided on an evening wedding. The great ambition of her life—to glide through a crowded church up to the altar, dressed in satin and real lace, to be married to "some gay and handsome fellow," could thus best be gratified.

So the bride had the long day before her in which to reflect on the importance of the step she was about to take—and to be dressed! She certainly thought much of the last and very little of the first. She knew that John Garwell was not a good man; that she had bought his hand; but these things did not make her afraid. She had admired him for his very vices; and she expected to be able to buy his good-will and attentions by being always able to give him money when he asked for it. As to his bad habits, some of them he would reform; and if he was fond of horses, and bet high sometimes, *that* would not break them!—she was going to be rich enough to stand a good deal of such folly.

So, on this all-important day, little Myra thought a great deal more about her bouquet of white rosebuds, of her coronet of diamonds and veil of old Venetian point—whether she should have room for the proper display of her seven-foot train; and if she should go through the ceremony without one blunder—than she did of her future prospects for happiness.

One trouble, indeed, she still had on her mind; and it gave to her baby-face a look of gravity which otherwise it would not have worn. This was the words and deeds of the ghost which haunted her chamber and the boudoir. No search, no trap to ensnare the impostor—should there prove to be one—had thrown any light on these visitations.

They had worn on her health and spirits very seriously; but, this was the last day! To-morrow she should be in Washington, with her husband by her side. On their return they would take rooms at the Continental for some time; and later they would spend the hot months by the seaside; her house would be left in the care of a housekeeper—and she should escape all troublesome reminders!

So the wedding-day wore surely on, and Myra put away all anxiety, except that about her dress. Lizette had packed her trunks and they had been sent to the depot early in the day. Everything was ready; and the bride had only to amuse herself with looking at the presents every hour arriving

There was an early dinner at which only she and her companion sat down, but Myra had always been curiously sufficient to herself; she did not feel any longing for Ethel's presence at this trying time, nor shed a tear because she was alone.

The dinner had been between the hours of three and four to give plenty of time for the elaborate labors of the toilet, and after one solitary tour through the flower-decorated rooms, and one more look at the table containing her bridal-gifts, she went up to her chamber and submitted herself to Lizette's tasteful and skillful hands.

"Make me just as pretty as you can, Lizette," she said, as she seated herself in front of the mirror.

But the French girl did not hear her, for she had gone into a closet to take down some garments and lay them out on the bed.

And, just at that moment, as Myra looked at herself in the glass with a smile, a film seemed to pass over it; something white and specter-like glided across the surface of the mirror, and the ghostly voice said, in most solemn tones:

"Ay, make thyself beautiful, vain girl! Deck thyself for the bridegroom who loves thee not. Lighter than the shadow of a shadow are thy hopes. Go not to the church, to-night! Leave this man, repent of thy selfishness, and thou may'st yet win happiness. Thou hast my blood in thy veins, and I would fain save thee from thyself."

"Lizette! Lizette!" screamed Myra.

"What is it?" asked the girl, running to her.

"He has spoken again! It is terrible! And, oh, Lizette, he bade me not to marry John Garwell!"

"Then do not do it!" cried Lizette, sinking on her knees by her mistress's side. "Heed this warning. Dear, dear mademoiselle, do not venture to disobey what, I feel, is intended for your good. Oh, pardon my presumption! but my heart is in the wish, and I must utter it! Discard this man. He is bad, he is selfish, he will make you wretched!" and tears ran down the cheeks of the pleader.

"It is too late—too late!"

"No, it is not too late. It will not be too late until you have stood at the altar with him. There will be some surprise, some gossip, but what is all that to the happiness of your whole life?"

Myra buried her face in her hands for two long minutes. Then she raised it, and there was a resolute look in it.

"I shall not give him up. I love him! With all his faults, I love him. I would rather be wretched with him than happy with anyone else. Get up from your knees, Lizette, and go on with my toilette. I want to look beautiful to him, I want him to be satisfied with me! I had quite a color awhile ago, and now I am as pale as—as a ghost, I was going to say," she added, with a forced laugh. "You are pulling my hair, you careless girl!"

"Pardon!—I was thinking. Mademoiselle, it is my duty to tell you that Mr. Garwell has tried to make love to me."

"What do I care! You are too pretty for your place. Lizette, after you have dressed me this time, consider yourself discharged!"

"Yes, mademoiselle, I already considered it best to go; and I have a new place engaged."

"I hope you are doing my hair right, all the same! So, he made love to you?" rather crossly.

"Oh, he's a terrible flirt, mademoiselle!"

"Why didn't you tell me, before?"

"I did not dare. Nor would I now, had not the ghost—ah, miss, if you would only give him his chance as he deserves!"

"You can torment me, now, for I have no one else to dress me! I am in your power. But I think you extremely insolent. A little higher, girl!—those puffs are not smooth—so!"

A knock at the door.

"Go to the door, Lizette."

"The Cuban woman is below, and asks to see you."

"At this time! How absurd! Tell her to come when I return from Washington. I am so annoyed, I shall cry next, and spoil my eyes. Shut the door, Lizette."

"A few tears might become you. They would be set down to a gentle sensibility."

"What is the matter with you, Lizette?"

"Nothing," returned the girl, laughing. "Your hair is done, now, and looks beautifully. I am going to the church to see you married, mademoiselle."

"Then who will keep guard over the presents? I expected you to do that."

"But I am discharged—just as soon as I have buttoned your dress and fastened the veil on."

"I really shall cry," whimpered Myra, evidently near a burst of tears.

"You have plenty of cause," retorted the impatient maid.

Myra shut her lips close together, then; she was vexed, angry, perplexed, not quite happy—but she could not afford to go to church ill-dressed, so the dressing went on for some time in silence.

"There!" cried Lizette, as the clock struck seven, "look at yourself in the mirror. All is done."

"I wish I were not so little," murmured the bride.

"That lovely train makes you quite tall, mademoiselle."

"My gloves—my fan—where is my bouquet?"

"Mr. Garwell will bring that. You look charming."

A tap at the door.

"Mr. Garwell is in the house—the carriages are at the door—will you come down?"

The bride swept through the open door, and down the velvet-covered stairs. The servants crowded the upper hall, looking down at her.

"A perfect fairy!" declared one.

"Just exquisite, she is, Nora!"

"Beautiful! Look at her wail!"

"An' them di'monds!"

"See! they're a-kissing of each other!"

"Oh, how sweet of 'em!" etc., etc.

Meantime, John Garwell, as he saluted the girl so soon to be his wife, cast his eyes upward at the faces peering over the banister. The swarthy yet bright and piquant face of the French maid fixed his wandering gaze.

"Who is that?" he asked, quickly.

"Who?" queried Myra.

"That brown gipsy up there!"

Myra glanced up and met the gaze of Lizette.

"As if you didn't know her!" she cried, remembering what the girl had told her. "You ought to blush with shame, John," and she swept into the lighted, flower-decorated drawing-room without taking his arm.

"Why should I blush, fairy?" John asked, more eagerly and anxiously than seemed natural. "I never saw the girl before."

"Be careful, sir!"

But there were half a dozen friends there who were going to drive to church in their company; and so the incipient quarrel did not come to anything that time. John looked at his watch and said it was time to start—the servants were given the word and laid down a carpet across the pavement—Myra was led out and placed in a carriage with two friends; John took his place in another; in twenty minutes they alighted before the church doors.

In five minutes more the bridal party walked up the broad aisles of the crowded church to the soft music of the "Wedding March." There were no bridesmaids or best men, so that all observation was concentrated on the bridal pair.

John Garwell looked as much at his ease as ever as he walked with his mother on his arm—a little too much at ease—too careless, too jaunty, and there was something almost like a sneer curling his lips.

Myra, too, was self-possessed. Nothing on earth did she like so well as display, and this grand occasion, for it placed her in her element. She had forgotten the ghost, Lizette, her cousin, the Cuban—she only remembered that she was the interesting heroine of this present scene—that it was *she* for whom all these lamps were lighted and people gathered—that her train was as long as in her wildest dreams she had pictured it—that she must be looking her best—and that she was going to be John Garwell's wife, at last!

The ceremony began—continued—ended. Not a mistake had marred the service.

An old friend of her uncle's had given her away—the responses were made, the ring was on her finger, the benediction pronounced. John Garwell and Myra Wainwright were man and wife.

The fashionably-dressed crowd kept its seat to allow the wedding-party to pass out first.

In the part of the church furthest from the altar sat Ethel, very plainly dressed, quite willing to escape observation, very, very sorry to see Myra the wife of such a man.

She heard the murmurs of admiration which broke from those around her, as the married pair came slowly back. A delicate bloom had come into the bride's fair cheeks—the coronet of pearls-and-diamonds sparkled over her brow—the large diamonds in her ears burned like shimmering rainbows—diamonds glittered on bosom and arms—her costly veil shrouded her so that she looked like a sprite parting the mists of evening—no wonder she was admired!

Ethel recognized her own diamonds; nevertheless tears of emotion swam in her dark eyes, and she sincerely wished that Myra might be happy and that John might reform.

The bride, in her slow progress out of the church on her husband's arm, kept her eyes cast modestly down; but just before they reached the vestibule, she raised them by chance, and they fell directly on the dark face of the Cuban woman, and on the splendid countenance of one who sat by her side—a young Southern beauty, magnificently beautiful, and most elegantly dressed, in white silk, and with flowers and jewels in her hair.

When Myra met the keen gaze of Olive, and beheld this young lady by her side—calm in her superb beauty as the japonica that blooms in its time—something struck to her heart which made her turn ghastly pale and falter.

This very Cuban woman had assured her that her uncle's daughter died before she was ten years old; and yet, there was now something in the mocking gaze of Olive—something in the dark beauty of the young lady by her side—that sent a pang of apprehension through her brain.

Had the Cuban deceived her? Was this young and wondrously fair woman the *true* Ethel—not dead?

Had the woman made a fool of her—Myra—and then brought on Cyrill Wainwright's daughter to triumph over her?

Was this Cyrill Wainwright's daughter?

Myra, now pale and trembling, glanced up into her husband's face. He had observed nothing.

"How cold you are, little wife," he observed, as he touched her hand.

"Am I?" she asked, shivering.

Some one wrapped a warm shawl lightly about her; but she still shivered in spite of it.

It was not until she found herself in the supper-room, and had drank the glass of champagne handed to her, that she ceased to tremble and could partially shake off the fear which had presented itself to her so suddenly.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A DREADED INTERVIEW.

Mr. and Mrs. John Garwell were off to Washington on their wedding-trip.

Webster Evelyn had returned from Cuba, this time in low spirits, since weeks of unremitting search had



not given him one fact more than those he had brought with him the first time.

The knowledge he had gained on his first visit had been slowly acquired, item by item, by persistent questioning of every living person who had known the Yosedos—every old servant on the estates, every plantation negro—the lawyers who had been employed by Mr. Yosedo, and later, by Donna Marie—their old friends in the city. And out of "trifles light as air," out of straws showing the set of the current, out of patiently pieced-together patches of information, he had built up the story which he gave to Mr. Dobell on his return. The one main fact—that the nurse, Olive, had exchanged the two children—he had discovered simply by the force of logic. Taken in connection with Cyrill Wainwright's two wills, in both of which he disowned Ethel as his child, all the lesser facts went to prove this great one. There absolutely could be no other solution of the mystery.

Of this Evelyn remained as positive as ever. But he had not succeeded in proving that the supposed child of the nurse—said to have died in her ninth year—was still living—was the young lady in the convent—was the true Ethel. He believed it; for he had worked it out by the same mental process which had disclosed the other thing; but he could not prove it; he could only learn that the young lady had left the convent. He could not even ascertain who had taken her away; so came home, disgusted with himself, as he went to break the news to Ethel.

It was evening when he called; and was asked to walk up-stairs to her room. The little stuffy parlor was not to be the scene of their interview, this time.

A flush passed over Evelyn's face when, on entering Ethel's pretty and tasteful sitting-room, he was greeted not only by her, but by Cadet Leigh. This young gentleman had an air of intimacy with the fair occupant which struck a sudden fear to the young lawyer's heart.

He was rendered still more uncomfortable when Ethel said to him, carelessly, that he might give her an account of his expedition with the same freedom as if they were alone; their mutual friend, Mr. Leigh, knew all about the matter.

Then, indeed, at this evidence of their confidential relations, the tortures of jealousy began with Webster Evelyn. His brow seemed on fire, his heart was a knotted organ, whose cords were so wrung and twisted that he was scarcely able to breathe; it was with the greatest difficulty that he could keep up an appearance of ease—that he could speak at all, or keep his eyes from fairly devouring the innocent pair who were so unconscious of his agitation.

For Evelyn's love was Evelyn's self; it was death to see the woman he loved in the company of a rival.

This was his reward for the three months he had devoted solely to the service of this beautiful girl!—to see her carrying on a love-affair with another before his very eyes!

And when he had explained to her his efforts and his ill-success, she was so careless about it!—she hardly appeared disappointed—she hardly listened to his explanations—she did not seem to feel sorry.

Under such circumstances Evelyn did not prolong his visit beyond the bounds of necessity. He soon rose to go; and when Ethel begged him to come again soon, when he was in less haste, thanking him with some warmth for what he had done, he condemned her in his mind as ungrateful and selfish, and went stumbling down the stairs, almost blind with the raging war between heart and brain.

"In love with that puppy!" he muttered, once out in the court, "that boy! that vain little cadet! A woman like Ethel! It seems incredible! Bertram Leigh is a mere boy—fit companion for that madcap school-girl, Coralie Clyde. But to mate with that gifted, that thoughtful nature—oh, is this a miserable dream? Am I mad—or is she? Away, sweet dreams of future joy—of a life passed with a woman, sweet, pure, noble, whose intellectual sympathies were with me in my work, whose heart was fond and true! Mocking dream! foolish dream! Yet, how dark it grows, now that the light of that dream is extinguished!"

It did seem as if Ethel might have grown somewhat thoughtless and light of purpose; for she laughed a little as she closed the door after Mr. Evelyn, and grew brighter and gayer than ever.

"It was naughty of me not to keep him longer," she said. "But, Bertram, I wanted this last evening with you—and I can make amends to Mr. Evelyn some other time."

"This last evening!" cried the cadet, surprised.

"Certainly. Is this not the fourteenth of April? Does Coralie not return to her friends to-morrow? Can I ever hope to see you after that?—any more than a stolen glimpse now and then? Don't think I have any idea of robbing Miss Clyde of her darling."

"I'll tell you what we'll do, dear Miss Ethel; we will spend all the time we can get to spend here, in your delightful room, and in your delightful presence! You know my visits are 'tabooed' at Coralie's house. So she will have to meet me here. You will make no objections, will you, my dear, sweet friend? You will allow us to come here—"

"And bill and coo? Dear me!"

"But you can go on with your painting all the same; you need pay no attention to us. We will be awfully good, and keep just as still as mice!" At this point a smothered laugh was heard in the bedroom adjoining.

"Who is in there?" cried Bertram, in a whisper.

"Only Lizette," answered Ethel, looking up from her embroidery with a smile.

"Who's Lizette, pray? That gipsy I saw here one evening?"

"The same, your lordship. She was Myra's dressing-maid; but was dismissed the night of the wedding; so she came to me and begged leave to stay a

few days until she could find another situation. I believe she has one engaged, already; so I shall not be troubled with her long. She is doing some sewing, which gives me more time for my painting."

"She had a pair of bright eyes," remarked the young man, speaking so as to be heard in the bedroom.

"Yes, and a nimble tongue!" laughed Ethel.

"May I go and take a peep at her?" rising.

"You saucy fellow! at your peril!" Come, lieutenant, it is nine o'clock, and Lizette wants me to try on the bonnet she is making me."

"You might let me stay a little longer. I shall not sleep a wink to night!—so I don't care to 'seek my restless couch' too early. I shall walk the streets for hours, after I go away from here?"

"Why?"

"Because to-morrow is the fifteenth. Do you think I am so cold-blooded as to go tamely to sleep to-night? I am dreadfully agitated, I assure you! I shall walk up and down before her house all day to-morrow. Then I shall see her when she arrives."

Then, changing his merry tone, he added, with deep feeling—"It is cruel, shameful, that I cannot enter that house like a man, and speak openly to the dear girl I love. Oh, Miss Ethel, if I were rich! if I had even a *name* that was my own to offer her! But it will take long years for me to win promotion: I shall always be poor. Why, why must loving hearts be sundered, as ours are?"

"You are both young," said Ethel, gently. "You can afford to wait. Be hopeful! Something may happen to your advancement, after all."

"I do try to be brave, dear friend. But it makes a fellow feel forlorn—it humbles and dispirits him, to be turned out of people's houses as if he were a criminal! I should like to win Coralie openly and honestly, with the consent of her aunts, but they treat me as if I were a dog. Never mind! I will have her, then, in spite of them! 'Coralie or death' is my motto. Please embroider it on a banner for me, and I will go forth like the youth in *Excelsior*," he added, brushing something warm and shining from his his eyelids, and returning to his gay manner.

"Well, good-night, my best friend, since you drive me off. Sweet dreams, and good-night!"

He went away, and no sooner had the door of the lower hall closed than Lizette slipped out into the sitting-room.

"He's a sweet young man," she said, laughing; "I wish I had such another! I trust his lady will be as true to him as he is to her."

"I trust so, truly."

"Are you coming out with me this evening, Miss Ethel?"

"Are you afraid to go alone, Lizette?"

"Not the least afraid."

"Then pray do excuse me. You have no idea how I suffer when I see those people! You cannot imagine the trial it is to my feelings! I believe another visit would make me really ill. So, if you do not need me, I will remain at home."

"Remain, by all means. I did not think enough of what you must suffer," added the French girl, with a look of pity into the beautiful face which had grown suddenly pale.

"When do you think it will end?" asked Ethel, as the other tied on a plain straw hat.

"Soon, soon, I am certain of it," returned Lizette, and hastened to leave the house.

"What a brave, kind, helpful, shrewd girl that is! She has done a thousand times more than I could or would. I only hope that her share of the benefits will equal mine."

Scarcely had Lizette's brisk footsteps died away on the pavement below, when the door-bell was rung, and her landlady's little girl came up to say:

"There's a woman in the hall who wants to see you, Miss Ethel. A funny, foreign woman, very dark—and she says her name is Olive. Shall I show her up?"

"Yes, Emma, let her come up." Ethel spoke calmly, but when the child had gone down again, she pressed her hand to her heart.

"The hour has come!" she murmured, with white lips. "Oh, what an inexpressible dread and aversion I feel!"

When the strange visitor knocked at her door, she steadied herself by placing one hand on the mantelpiece, and called hoarsely for her to enter.

The Cuban woman entered.

The two looked each other in the face.

The Cuban had no bonnet on, only a handkerchief of scarlet silk pinned over her smooth black hair; she wore a dress of black silk, with a necklace of large gold beads. With the exception of the power and intensity of her expression there was nothing to mark her as differing from an ordinary, respectable nurse—unless, indeed, a certain stateliness of the tall, fine figure made a difference.

She saw before her a slender girl, pale as death, very beautiful, staring at her with wide-open, frightened eyes.

"You are afraid of me," she said, after an intense silence, speaking in low, musical tones.

Ethel opened her lips to say that she would try not to be, but they moved without making any sound.

"I don't wonder you look at me so," continued the Cuban. "But try to be calm—try to understand what I have to tell you."

"Wait a moment," gasped Ethel. "Let me collect my thoughts. I am afraid I shall go mad."

"Am I so terrible to you?"

"I am trying to overcome this feeling; give me a little time."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### UNDER THE BATTERY OF EYES!

NEVER had there been such a commotion in the sedate household of the Misses Featherflight, as on

the morning of the fifteenth of April. Cook had orders to get up a sumptuous lunch, and a still more sumptuous dinner; for no one knew just when to expect the wicked, sinful girl who had played them such a grave trick. The up-stairs girl had a certain pretty room to air and get in immaculate order. George had to go to the florist's, polish up the door-steps to even more than their usual slippery whiteness, set the lunch-table with all the family silver he could find an excuse for, and do innumerable errands, all of which he executed correctly, but in so wild a manner that Miss Priscilla became so nervous she would have liked to cry.

By ten o'clock in the forenoon the sisters entered the front parlor with a color on their cheeks such as had not bloomed there for years.

The shutters to the front windows were thrown back, and each lady drew a chair close to a window and there seated herself to watch and wait.

"Does thee think she will be here to luncheon, sister?" inquired Charity, timidly.

"I fear not, Charity; set not thy heart upon it."

"I will labor with myself to be patient," answered meek Charity, ashamed of her emotion. So the two elderly ladies sat, almost as silent as if at one of their church meetings, knitting furiously at the stockings which partially relieved the strain upon their nerves. A half-hour passed slowly on, and then Priscilla, bending her sheer muslin cap a little nearer to the window, cried quickly:

"Who is that, sister—the man over the way? He walks back and forth, and looks over here very strangely."

"Sister, it must be—it is that impudent cadet! He has on a coat over his uniform, and he wears a straw hat—but it is that wolf in sheep's clothing!"

"Oh, the iniquity of the present generation!"

"Oh, the boldness of that deceitful youth!"

"Charity, does thee think of anything that can be done? Shall I send George to drive him away?"

"He is not on our pavement, Priscilla; is thee sure thee has a right to interfere?"

Priscilla groaned as she stooped to pick up the ball of yarn she had dropped.

"This is too outrageous!" she cried, warmly.

"'Tis too bad, that in a Christian country, young men should be permitted to do such things. What are we coming to?"

"What are we, truly, sister?"

"That young man must have a serpent's guile. Who told him we looked for our niece to-day?"

"It passeth our knowledge, Priscilla."

"So shamelessly bold! right in our face and eyes!"

"In broad daylight!"

"Here he comes back again! Up and down, like a sentry. I trust the neighbors will not make a scandal out of it. Charity, I believe I will go to the door and call him over, to reason with him and perchance persuade him of his shamelessness."

"Thee had better send George to invite him in."

"But, if niece arrives while he is in the house!"

"Yea, I thought not of that."

"Verily, he will keep his ground until she comes!"

"Charity, I must remove my seat from this window. It is too disturbing to my peace of mind to see that young donkey giving himself airs—"

"Priscilla, thee is losing thy temper."

"'Twould make a saint lose his temper, then."

"Oh, sister, a carriage stops before our door!"

Miss Featherflight rushed back to the window.

Yes, the door of the carriage was opened by the driver, and out flew the naughty darling of these two hearts. They saw the brown curls flying, the soft cheeks glowing, the dark-gray eyes flashing, from under a cunningly-becoming hat; they saw, with ire unspeakable, which almost ruined their joy, that impertinent cadet stop stock-still on the opposite pavement and lift his wide-brimmed hat from his curly head; but they did not see their niece, when she had run up the steps, blow him a coquettish kiss from the tips of her rosy fingers.

The next instant some one had fluttered by the beaming George, with a gay smile at him, rushed into the parlor like a breath of sweet May flowers and fields, setting everything to dancing, even the blood of her dear old aunts. This Some One got an arm around either stately neck, without regard to crumpling the clear-starched neckerchiefs, and rained kisses on the dear, pale cheeks, and was in such a breeze of laughter and April shower of tears, that they had not a word of reproach, except:

"Oh, niece, how could you be such a bad girl?"—

From aunt Priscilla; then they cried, and smiled, and appeared to grow gladder and gladder to see that madcap girl in their house again. The spring sunshine peeped through the curtain, the cook came up with a grin on her face, George was shaking, in the vestibule, with cacklings of mirth, to think of how young missa had kissed her hand to that young gentleman; and Coralie herself looked so rosy and blooming, so bright and fair and innocent, so childish and sweet and loving—how could they help being a little bit less mournful and sober?

"I'm glad that sailor-uncle didn't come home with her!" thought Priscilla, as they took their places at the lunch-table.

"Niece, how did thee come?"

"All alone, auntie dear."

"'Tis a wonder thee escaped in passing through that Sodom, the city of New York."

"Oh, I was all right, aunt Priscilla—just as safe as if I'd been riding through this Gomorrah, the city of Philadelphia, in the street-cars."

"Nay," asseverated aunt Charity, "there is no comparison 'twixt the two cities, child."

"Well, I'm here, auntie, safe and sound; and awfully glad to get back, I tell you! I've been homesick enough part of the time—yet I've had a most uncommon lot of fun, too."

"Does Madame B. allow thee to say 'awful' and 'lot,' niece?" inquired Priscilla.



"No, indeed! But when one has been with all sorts of people one gets into bad habits. I'll try to reform now, aunt Priscilla; and I mean to be aw—very, very good for a long time."

"Then perchance, thee will be willing to make me a promise," observed Priscilla, putting a spoonful of chicken salad on the plate of the hungry wanderer, and telegraphing to George, by a look, that he could retire to his pantry.

"What promise?"

"Not to hold any communication whatever, for one year, with Cadet Bertram Leigh. Thee will not be eighteen even then, and canst surely abide by our judgment until then."

"Aunt Priscilla," said Coralie, "you drove me out of your house once—will you not be wise in time? I came back with the resolution to be discreet and obedient; but I will not bind myself by a promise. It may be necessary that I hold some communication with him before the year is out—who can tell? If you would only permit him to come to your house, I should not have to meet him outside of it."

Miss Featherflight struck her hand-bell. George appeared from the pantry.

"George, go to the hall door, and see if that gentleman is still promenading on the other side of the street."

Coralie held her breath with astonishment, while the servant went out, grinning from ear to ear.

"Yes, madam," he reported, a moment later.

"Go, ask him to come in and lunch with us."

Coralie glanced sidewise at the solemn face of her aunt, while the blood crept redly into her own.

In three minutes Cadet Leigh stood in the dining-room door, hat in hand, looking slightly puzzled and excited, but as frank, as innocent, as manly as you could wish any handsome young fellow to look in the presence of such dignity.

"Come in, Cadet Leigh," spoke up Priscilla, coldly. "Come in and have some luncheon with us. Our niece, Coralie Clyde," she continued, as he advanced to the table.

The lovers looked at each other a little sheepishly, bowed formally, and Bertram took the chair George placed for him.

"Bring a hot plate for the fried oysters, George." The man went for the plate. "Cadet Leigh, thee is now introduced to our niece, and at liberty to make her acquaintance, in the proper way. I leave it to thy honor as a gentleman not to take advantage of this liberty. When Coralie Clyde is eighteen she will have property of her own and be independent. Until then it will be *mean* of thee to make love to her. Thee can call upon her here in the evening, once a month. One of us will be present. There comes thy plate—will thee try the fried oysters?"

"If you please—two. The Mohawk sails so soon, now, madame, that I shall be unable to avail myself of the inestimable privilege you have granted me for some time. But I thank you, all the same."

"Where will the Mohawk sail to?"

"To San Francisco first—afterward, well, perhaps to China."

"To China!" burst from Coralie's quivering lips.

"A fine part of the world to visit," said Miss Featherflight, extremely pleased.

And then a very formal, very stilted, very uninteresting conversation went on; but the lovers, if they could but poorly use their tongues, could make a better use of their eyes, and they did make it. How eloquent eyes can be! What worlds and worlds of love and grief—what vows to be faithful—what fond protestations did these two pairs of bright young eyes speak, across that table!

When luncheon was done with, Bertram was invited into the drawing-room.

"Coralie, we shall go for a drive at two. Thy friend can spend the time with thee until that hour," and resuming her knitting, Miss Priscilla took a seat in a far corner of the room, leaving the young people sitting on two stiff chairs and looking at each other very uncomfortably.

"Tough on a fellow, when he hasn't seen his girl for five long months!" murmured Bertram.

"What would you do, different, if aunt Priscilla was out of the way?"

"What? As if you didn't know, you darling little Quakeress! I'd find out how you looked when a man kissed you."

"Would you? You might find I looked daggers."

"I'd risk it. A brave U. S. cadet should not shrink from daggers."

"Well, I'm awfully glad auntie is present."

"Coralie Clyde, I took you to be a truthful girl!"

"Don't you want to hear where I've been since last Christmas?"

"Ay, ay, go on with your fish-story, my little land-lubber."

"Cadet Leigh, if you speak so disrespectfully, I will not open my lips at all."

"I heard you were up at Nantucket, trying to fit yourself for a sailor's wife."

"Indeed? Did you hear *what* sailor? There's a sea-captain to be had in Nantucket for the asking."

"I'm not of a jealous disposition, Miss Clyde."

"Bertram," said the girl, changing her tone, "is it true that the Mohawk is ordered to California?"

"Too true to suit me. I wish I could resign."

Tears came into Coralie's dark eyes; he saw them, and a lump came in his throat:

"Isn't it too bad? Yet it is what I once wished for most. Oh, how love *does* unman a fellow!"

"I wonder if it would make you happy if I told you something I know—make you happy on that long voyage! I've half a mind to tell you."

"Do, dearest."

"Well, I will. 'Better be born lucky than rich.'"

"Oh, you little tease!"

"You were born lucky, Bertram."

"Prove it."

"You made my acquaintance! Really, Bertram—can you move your chair a little nearer?"

"Yes. I will seem to want to get near the window. How is that?"

"Good. Aunt Priscilla is frowning awfully; I can't help it. I'm going to tell you something very important and serious before you sail—something that will make you very happy."

"What is it?"

Coralie looked at him sideways from under the shadow of her curved lashes, and said, in tones very low but full of meaning:

"I have found out your true name—where you were born—and how you came to be put in a Foundling Asylum!"

"Coralie, are you jesting? Do not torture me!"

"Your true name is Bertram—you were born on the Western continent—and you were put in the Asylum because your mother was ashamed of your red face, which looked as if you had been drinking."

Bertram was so vexed he made no reply, but pulled at his downy mustache in silent reproof.

"You will come to see me before you sail, and then, upon my word, I really will tell you something to your 'advantage,' as the advertisements say, Bertram Leigh."

Bertram saw that the e was something serious under her playful manner, and his heart beat high.

"She has heard something up North," he thought.

But Miss Priscilla arose to announce that the limit of his visit was reached; and so he was obliged to thank her and go away, all on fire with curiosity.

## CHAPTER XX.

HE COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT HER!

"Give me a little time!" pleaded poor Ethel, as the Cuban stood before her, looking her through with those keen eyes.

Her whole being shrunk from the woman. A strong shuddering took hold of her—a retiring of her soul into its own depths, to hide from that scrutiny.

Ethel, in the days of her prosperity, when she had ruled queen of the house and queen of her set, had been a very proud girl. Not arrogant—kind to the poor and sympathetic with others' woes—yet with a strong sense of the worth of blood, and that refinement which comes from several generations of culture. She had been proud of her father and his family. She had an unspoken but active idea that she was of better clay than the majority of mankind—that she must be very gentle and considerate with her inferiors—but they *were* inferiors.

Now, every atom of her being quivered and shrunk from her fate, as she faced this stranger with white face and piteous eyes, waiting to hear that claim upon her which she expected her to make—waiting to hear her say: "You are my child! My blood runs in your veins! I have come to seek you and to tell you that it is your duty to call me 'mother.'"

Ah! if she might not hear *that* said!

It was nothing to be poor, but to be humbled by such another as this would be terrible.

The Cuban continued to gaze on her calmly.

"Shall I speak now?" she asked, after a pause.

Ethel bowed her head, for the word of assent would not come.

A flickering smile that had the glint of a laugh in it—a sarcastic laugh—came into the Cuban's eyes.

"You have been informed, I dare say, that you are my child?" she began.

Again Ethel slightly inclined her head.

"And you do not fancy such a mother?"

This time there was absolutely no response.

"I do not blame you. You were brought up to believe yourself a lady—to be one of the highest amid people of your kind. You were educated to be proud and partikular. I am responsible for that. I have made all the trouble. I have been a bad, wicked woman in my day. I was very handsome when I was a girl; and I had ideas in my head of being more than people like me are generally. I flattered myself that my beauty would catch me a gentleman for a husband."

"I admired the young gentleman who came to see my young ladies. When I found that he would pay no attention to me, I was jealous and I felt revengeful. So did Donna Marie, poor lady. We entered into each other's feelings as completely as if she wasn't a lady and I her maid. But you know the story; I won't repeat it. When the proposition to exchange babies was made to me, I not only saw a chance to spite my master, but I saw a chance to advance my own darling daughter."

"She should be a lady, if I could not! The haughty gentleman should lavish his caresses and his wealth on *my* child—should love her as his own—should give her, in good time, to some rich lover who would keep his wife in diamonds and give her a golden dish to eat out of every day."

"The idea tickled me; it was not hard to persuade me to do that wicked thing. Girl! you ought not to blame me so much! Had I not done it, what would you be now?—little better than a slave on some Cuban plantation!—no education, no manners of a fine lady. You could not have played the pianer, nor painted them pretty pictures I see here, nor looked so like a queen. I'm proud of you now; and I don't want you to feel hard to me. I've got some money laid up for you; and I've no doubt you can make as good a match as any of 'em yet."

"And I've done as well by that other girl as I could. My conscience couldn't bear it, to see her growing up, a most like the negro children on the plantation. So I made up a plan; and when she was between nine and ten, I give out that she was dead, and I got her spirited away to a convent-school. I was well able to pay her way there, out of all the money that Donna Marie give me for always doing what she wanted; and I'd always have good wages and lots o' presents."

"So it was let on at the school that she was the niece of a rich old man, up in the mountings, who was educating her for his heiress; and she never did a hand's turn of work, but was brought up like a lady. She graduated in that convent last year. She sings, plays, talks French an' Italian, and embroiders beautiful. 'She's as handsome as a picture, like her poor mother was. She's just as much of a lady as if she had been brought up to home. She fully believes I'm her mother.'

"Now, what I come to you about was this: you're my child. But I ain't going to torment you with that—I'm going to leave you alone to do as you please. You needn't never come a step with me, nor acknowledge me."

Here she stopped and contemplated, with bright cunning eyes the face of Ethel, who stood, like a statue, gazing back at her.

"I come to see you about this. Seeing you can't have Cyrill Wainwright's property, anyhow—seeing I'm disappointed in my plans after all, and that little cat who was married to that gambler gets everything; and they'll both spend it as soon as they can—under the circumstances, will it not be best for me to confess to your lawyer, Mr. Dobell, and get him to bring forward Mr. Wainwright's real daughter's claims? Don't you think that girl ought to be set up in her rights? If the conspiracy between me and Donna Marie is proved, don't you think the courts will set aside the will and restore the property to his daughter?" As she concluded these questions, an indescribable gleam of anxiety, artfulness and avarice showed in her eyes.

"Yes," Ethel answered, after a moment's consideration.

"Is it my duty to criminate myself to give her her rights?"

"Yes. Undoubtedly. If you do not do it, now, I shall force you to do it, by betraying all you have told me. That poor victim of your wickedness has been kept out of her own too long! The amends you may make must be swift and full. Since you have told me this, I shall not permit you to falter. Cyrill Wainwright's daughter must have all that belongs to her; every jot and tittle of her possessions must be restored to her."

A gleam of triumph could not be repressed in the Cuban's swarthy countenance.

"I am quite willing it shall be so," she responded, humbly.

"Poor Myra," murmured Ethel to herself; "she has already spent thrice over the \$10,000 that was bequeathed to her!"

"Speaking of that person," observed the woman, confidentially, "I have fooled her to the top of her bent. She thinks Cyrill Wainwright's daughter is dead, and that *she* is mistress of everything!"

"Why did you deceive her?"

"There were some matters I wanted her to tell me about; and I could not win her confidence without promise of gain to her. I wished her to marry well, too, while she had the reputation of being her uncle's heiress."

"Cruel kindness!" whispered Ethel, thinking of John Garwell and the sort of husband he would make to a poor girl.

"Will you send for the lawyer? May I meet him here?"

"Better here than anywhere else."

"When?"

"To-morrow evening. I must have time to send for him and have a talk with him, first."

"Shall I come at eight to-morrow evening, then?"

"Yes."

The woman drew nearer to the shivering girl.

"You don't care to own me, I suppose," she said, in a low voice. "I'm not going to interfere with your way of living. You're above me—far above me—and I won't vex and mortify you. I'll go away when the matter is settled; and you can live here as you do now. I have enough money to set you up nicely if you ever want to marry. I dare say you don't care to shake hands with me?"

Ethel made an effort to extend her ice-cold hand, but she could not do it—the shrinking in her was too great.

"Never mind, my pretty—I didn't expect it! I ain't going to worry you. Good-night—I'll be on hand to-morrow."

"My God! was there ever a poor, helpless girl tried as I am?" murmured Ethel, when the Cuban had backed softly out of the room and closed the door behind her. "This is worst of all! I knew it before she came, but I could not harden myself against such a meeting with such a mother."

She sunk down on the floor and was sitting there, all in a heap, sobbing as if her heart would break, when Lizette returned.

"Oh, what a friendless creature I am!" she complained, as the French girl, throwing off her hat, sat down on the floor beside her, and gently drew the sad face to her bosom.

"You are going to-morrow, Lizette; and you are the only one who cares for me."

"Oh, no—Mr. Dobell cares for you."

"In a lawyerly way," added Ethel.

"And the good lady down-stairs seems fond of you. And I shall come, every time I can get out, to visit you. My dear mademoiselle, I beg of you to keep up your spirits. All is going well. I feel confident that I shall have an astounding discovery to announce to you within a week. Yea, two astounding discoveries. The Cuban was here to-night; I don't wonder you are agitated. She's an awful old humbug, I tell you! And we'll circumvent her yet."

"How can you talk of being friendless, mademoiselle, when you have the handsome cadet coming here so often?"

"He is only a boy, Lizette."

"Mr. Evelyn is not a boy."



"What of that? What have I to do with Mr. Evelyn? You're a great tease, Lizette!"

"I am going to tell you something about him. You are weary and vexed, and this piece of news will amuse you. I want to prove to you, too, how much sharper my eyes are than yours—Mr. Evelyn is dead in love with you! there!"

"In love with me?"

"Certainly. Everybody sees it but you."

"Impertinent!"

"Who?—Mr. Evelyn or myself?"

"Both of you. What business has he to think of such a thing?"

"The same business that any earnest, honest man has, I suppose. He is a gentleman, I am sure, mademoiselle; and he has an education and a profession. He seems an excellent person—not one of your conceited, thistledown fellows, like Mr. Leigh."

"Lizette, don't worry me with talk about Mr. Evelyn. I do not intend ever to fall in love, or ever to marry. I have chosen my calling—to go on painting flowers forever—or until I am old and blind."

Lizette laughed in gay scorn of this declaration.

But, when she had taken up one of her companion's white hands and found how feverish it was, she coaxed her to go to bed, undid her rich mass of dark-brown hair for her, dropped some aconite in a wine-glass with water and gave her; and then, when she had tucked her up, sat by the bedside some time, softly singing in a sweet, soothing voice—as if Ethel were a baby to be crooned to sleep—before retiring to the little bed in the attic which she had rented of the landlady.

Lizette, plainly, would be a jewel of a maid, for any lady who should be so fortunate as to secure her services.

The next morning Ethel wrote a note to Mr. Dobell, asking him to call and see her as early in the day as convenient.

Lizette had taken herself off to her new place, and Ethel was sitting quite alone, trying to fix her mind on the work she was doing, when the expected knock sounded on her door. She put aside her painting and arose to open it; but instead of Mr. Dobell, Mr. Evelyn came in.

Ethel showed her disappointment almost too plainly, so that the young lawyer grew somewhat embarrassed as he explained that the elder one was in court, conducting a case, and had sent him to take Miss Ethel's instructions.

"As I know all about your legal affairs, he considered that I might take his place for once," he concluded.

"Very well," rejoined the lady, a little more coldly than she would have spoken were it not for those impertinent remarks of Lizette the previous day. "Olive has come to me at last, as I feared she would. She told me what you have told me—and she wants to consult Mr. Dobell, this evening, about restoring the stolen daughter to her proper position, and recovering her fortune."

Mr. Evelyn asked some questions, and they went on to discuss the matter at full length.

It was a lovely April day; the window was open to admit the soft air. Ethel was dressed in a soft, white morning wrapper; it was the first time Evelyn had seen her in white, and he could not refrain from noticing how much it became her—how lovely and girlish she looked in that simple robe, with a bunch of pinks in her dark hair, and a few violets pinned in the bosom of her dress. Her rich, dark complexion showed to the best advantage contrasted with white, her hair was in morning freedom, falling in long, heavy curls down to her shoulders. She looked so sweet, so young, so helpless, that Evelyn's eyes grew dim as he watched her. That proud look habitual with her, made her solitary life and the bitter humiliation of her birth appear more pitiful.

"So she avers that she is your mother, as we feared?" he asked, very gently.

"Yes—oh, yes! A severe punishment for my aristocratic tendencies, is it not?" endeavoring to speak lightly, but the observant lawyer heard the thrill of pain in her voice and saw the quivering of the long, drooped lashes.

His heart swelled in his throat. He had intended to be very prudent, be very reserved—to win the proud girl's love by faithful and constant service, if so be it were possible for him to win it at all. But now a great wave of love and pity swept over him and washed him from that rock of purpose on which he had fixed himself. He leaned forward in his chair, the warm color rose to his forehead, his piercing eyes grew strangely tender and luminous.

"Is it wrong, is it all selfishness on my part, for me to be glad, in one sense, that you, Ethel, are not so far removed from me and my hopes and dreams, as you were when you were the haughty daughter of a merchant-prince? I loved you then—I love you now. Then without hope—still without hope. I know that I have done nothing—am nothing—to win your maiden fancies to dwell favorably on me. I expect nothing but your displeasure, now that, seeing you so sad and lonely, this passionate yearning to solace, to comfort the woman whom I so love that I shall live only for her, though she sweep me out of her presence as if I were a withered leaf—has driven me beyond my power of self-control. Still, it may be a source of pleasure to you that neither lowly birth, poverty or misfortune can make you other in my eyes than the sweetest and loveliest of women, whom I should be proud to defend in the face of the world. I have not given my love lightly—I have fought with desperation against it—because I knew how hopeless it was; such as it is, it is yours, to pity, to scorn, to trample on; or to take up and cherish. Would that I, instead of being poor and struggling, were a prince, an emperor, that I might better show you the regard I have for you."

Two or three times Ethel attempted to stop the passion of words which she did not care to hear; but the lover had risked his earthly hopes in speaking at this time, and now that he had betrayed himself he was determined to go on.

"You do not care for me—I know that," he added, when she looked up at him, trying to frame her speech so as least to hurt him.

"No, Mr. Evelyn, I do not care for any man. And I do not think I ever shall. Thank you, for wishing to befriend me. You have proved your unselfish interest by what you have done for me in Cuba. Let us be friends still. Do not do anything, please, to prevent our being friends."

She looked at him so pitifully, so sadly, as she said this, that he was completely silenced. His pride had received no wound, for she had told him that she loved no man.

It was not so much that she could not love him as that she would love no one. She had learned to distrust professions of feeling, perhaps. Or her own griefs and perplexities were so absorbing that she had room for no other emotions.

"Come with Mr. Dobell, this evening, and behold this real daughter, for whom I have so long been mistaken," she added, seeing him stand before her, silent and pale.

Evelyn bowed, and went away from the fair, sweet maiden, so humble and yet so proud, standing there with flushed cheeks and downcast eyes, so determined to give him no encouragement—went out into the fresh air—laden, in the little court, with the breath of violets—bearing a heavy heart.

"I cannot live without her!" he cried inwardly, as her image, clad in a soft white dress, with pinks in her dark hair, floated before his mind's eye more vividly than did the phantoms of men and women who passed him in the street.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL."

It was evening of the same day. Ethel, in her pretty chamber—waited the arrival of those who were to meet in that room.

She was not certain that Olive would bring with her the girl who was to take the place she once occupied. Yet she anticipated it. The girl was brightly, nay, superbly beautiful, with a sort of wild and unsubdued beauty, such as we find in tropic birds and flowers—Ethel knew this, for she had seen her; and she foresaw that the Cuban would bring her before the lawyer, thinking to prepossess him and charm him into becoming her advocate.

It was hardly eight o'clock when she heard a stir in the narrow hall, followed by a tap at her door. At her bidding the door swung open, and the Cuban led in the young lady whom we have seen with her in their apartments.

"Miss Ethel," said the Cuban, "this is Olive—so called—but truly Ethel, while you are my Olive."

The two girls looked at each other with fascinated gaze.

The young stranger, careless and easy as was her manner, shrunk a little under the calm eyes of the other.

Of the same age, both tall and of graceful figure, both lovely of face, no wonder that they faced each other with feelings of deepest interest.

But Ethel was not thinking so much even of the sumptuous charms of her rival as she was of another thing. Her one keen thought was to look for some feature of her father's in this brilliant face.

"She must be all mother," was her decision, after a moment—"I do not see one expression—one curve or feature of my father here."

The Cuban looked from one to the other of the two girls, as they regarded each other. There was a subtle glimmer of some thought—not an honest one—in her watchful, brilliant eyes.

But she had not long to continue her covert and cunning regard; for Mr. Dobell, with young Evelyn, arrived almost directly after her.

In another moment Cadet Leigh also knocked at the door; and as Ethel had not the least objection to his hearing the discussion, he was invited in.

And now, on the appearance of these gentlemen, Ethel noticed a change in the girl whose history was so curiously linked with her own. The dark eyes kindled, the velvety cheeks glowed, the lithe figure assumed most coquettish attitudes, and around the scarlet and budding lips played an almost insolent smile of expectation and triumph, which said, as plainly as words:

"Behold, how beautiful I am—how worthy of all that you can do, gentlemen, to raise me to that high position in which I will reign the queen of loveliness and love."

Ethel perceived, too, the impression which this splendid young creature made on her own true friend, Mr. Dobell. Men are easily dazzled by dark, smiling eyes and roseleaf mouths; Mr. Dobell certainly was surprised and snared by the dark beauty of the Southern girl—a beauty heightened by her magnificent dress—dress of a style which in the critical North, would have been called "stunning," but which, in a southern clime, was considered appropriate. Ethel's plain black dress, fitting her elegant figure demurely, was in strong contrast to the lemon-colored satin robe and over-dress of finest silk gauze—the bare arms and shoulders, the jewels and flowers in the purple-black hair of the other.

But this luxurious toilet had its effect on the men, as it was intended to have—on all the men except Evelyn; and whether love made his eyes sharper, or what, it proved that the splendid dress and smiling manner of the young Cuban stamped her, in his mind, as an adventuress.

In his eyes, Ethel, modest, sad, dignified—her pale cheeks unflushed by the excitement of the hour—her pure brow beaming with soul—her mourning

dress clinging to her slight, full, supple form in plain folds—no ornament about her except the cluster of carnations in her dark hair—was a thousand times more womanly and more lovable than this brilliant tropical creature with her inappropriate full dress and her theatrical attitudes.

The story which Olive had to tell is too familiar to need repetition. She went over it in full, giving every detail, and so working it up with incident and the coloring of her own feelings that not a doubt remained in Mr. Dobell's mind of its utter truth.

He was sorry for the girl whose friend he had been so long; but he could not help thinking—as he glanced at the splendid beauty who sat, smilingly, like a youthful Cleopatra, in her corner of the sofa—that her place would be well filled.

Cadet Leigh hardly attended to what was being said, he was so fascinated by those wonderful eyes.

"I am to make out the deposition, to which you will swear," said the lawyer, when Olive had told her story. "On the strength of this deposition, I am to set about breaking the will, by means of which Mrs. Myra Garwell now enjoys the estates which belong—no court will dispute her rights—to the daughter of Cyril Wainwright. I do not anticipate much trouble," smiling, as he half-bowed to the young empress on the sofa.

"Mrs. Garwell has been lavish of the money," remarked the Cuban; "the sooner a stop is put to her squandering what is not her own the better."

"Ay," responded the lawyer, half-laughing, "John Garwell has got himself into a scrape. I pity his wife with all my heart."

"She does not deserve much pity," began the Cuban, but Ethel silenced her with an imperious wave of her hand.

"Myra is my cousin," she said, "please spare these remarks. It is dreadful to me that she should be such a victim to fate—lifted high to be dashed low. Have some respect for her disappointment," and with "level-fronting eyelids" she swept a rebuking glance about the room.

Evelyn looked at her admiringly.

"True as steel to her friends!" he murmured.

Evelyn had come here as an observer—not to take any part in the business—and as an observer he had watched every expression of the Cuban's face and marked every word of her story. He had not been satisfied with it. But it was not for him to challenge her.

"How soon can matters be arranged?" asked Olive.

"I don't know. The bride returns at the end of a fortnight. I shall see and talk with her before taking the will into court. She may realize the force of necessity, and make over the property without an attempt to defend the will. I shall advise her to do so," answered Mr. Dobell.

"Ethel Wainwright," spoke up the Cuban, in a loud voice, advancing to the girl on the sofa, "as it was I who wronged you, let me be the first to congratulate you," and she held out her hand.

"I forgive you," said the Southern girl, smiling round upon the others, and laying a jeweled hand in the woman's.

The little company was silent, looking on at this scene—an awkward one, one might think, for her who had grown up as Ethel Wainwright—hardly knowing what act was next on the programme—when, through the oppressive silence, in the air over their heads, came a thrilling, hollow, strange and solemn voice, saying:

"Mockery! The true Ethel Wainwright is she who has always borne that name. I know, now, that my infant child was never taken from me. Woman! REPEAT, while there is yet time! REPEAT! Undo thy falsehoods. Here, before these witnesses, tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

The same voice which had spoken so often in that other house!

Even Ethel was startled and turned pale; the men glanced at one another and about the room.

The Cuban turned a sickly yellow and cast a terrified glance at the ceiling. But, as one making a great effort, she said, slowly to those about her:

"I have told no lies. I have nothing to repent of."

"You are subtle and sly, but you cannot cheat the dead. Once more—speak the truth, or choose the alternative. Speak the truth, or I will never leave thee, night or day, living or dying. I will haunt thee everywhere—by thy bedside—in church—at midnight. Take thy choice."

"Mary, Mother of Christ, drive this evil spirit away. As I live, I have spoken the truth," gasped the woman, dropping on her knees.

"Take thy choice."

"I have spoken the truth."

"Thou hast made thy choice. Now, as one who lieth, and chooseth to dwell in vaults with the spirits of the dead, thou shalt abide with me. And the Church, when it heareth of thy crime, shall excommunicate thee."

Casting a glance of appeal, of anguish, at the beautiful girl who sat, pale and wide-eyed, staring about her in alarm, Olive dropped her head in her hands and groaned.

"COME!" cried the bodiless voice.

"No—no!" shrieked the wretched creature; "away! away! Leave me and I will tell all!"

"Nay, I remain to search thy statements."

"Jesu—Jesu! I will speak the truth!"

"Where is that first child of Isabella and Cyril Wainwright, who seemed to die and was buried?—the six weeks' old son to whom—for the price paid thee by Donna Marie—thou gavest the dose of poison?"

"Holy Mother! this is, indeed, the dead who speaketh!"

"Where is that child?"

"HERE—IN THIS ROOM."

The woman, answering as if at the confessional, raised her head and looked strangely at Bertram



Leigh. As he met her eyes his heart leaped in his breast and then fell still as stone, to hear what further she had to say.

"Ay. Tell these witnesses all."

Olive glanced around upon the company. Abject fear now made her obedient. Her face was gray in the lamplight, as she spoke in a low voice, hurriedly:

"Donna Marie tempted me, with a large sum, to poison her sister's son. I consented. But, indeed, I could not do such a thing! I could not murder a helpless babe. I gave him a sleeping-potion, which made him as one dead; he was laid in his little grave at sunset; but I took him up an hour later, and watched for him to come out of his trance, and fed and nourished him. For months I had him sequestered in a cabin on the plantation, in care of a deaf old 'mammy'; then I got him conveyed to the Foundling Hospital at Havana, and he grew there and flourished like a weed. I know—for I kept myself informed. All this time Donna Marie, she thinks the little fellow dead. But I did not murder him—oh, no!" and she looked helplessly up at the faces bent over her.

"What became of him?" asked a sharp, quavering voice.

It was Bertram Leigh who asked this question, in a voice which he hardly recognized as his own—it was Bertram Leigh's pale face which leant down as he spoke.

"He did mighty well there, and grew a handsome child. I kept watch, for I was in Havana with the mistress weeks at a time. Once when I was in the city, a gentleman from the North—somewhere in Massachusetts, he said—came to the hospital, and fell in love with the pretty boy, he said; he had no children—so he took that one—and he brought him up well—almost as well as if he'd been his own flesh and blood. You see him, folks! He stands there before you. Judge for yourselves. Bertram Leigh is that baby boy, I swear to you!"

Bertram put his hand to his heart and fell into a chair, almost fainting. Ethel brought him a glass of water.

"I know, now, why I liked you so much," she said, smiling, as he took the glass. "It was because you reminded me of my father—of that man they called my father. No wonder you are so handsome, Bertram, since you are the son of Cyrill Wainwright! Hark!"

"And the little daughter?" said the ghost, solemnly.

"I exchanged the little girls in their cradles," sobbed the woman, wringing her hands.

"And—"

"Could not bear to do the deed. So I brought my mistress's little girl back to her the very next night. And all I've told you, good people, about my Olive here being the heiress, is lies and wickedness. And all I told Cyrill Wainwright, a few weeks before he died, was lies and wickedness. I am sure I beg your pardons, all. You see, I was always one of the discontented ones; and I thought my daughter ought to have everything. I kept her nice, an' eddicated her, on the money Donna Marie gave me; an' when Donna Marie died, an' I couldn't look to her for no more, then I thought over that plan of exchanging the children, and I said to myself, 'it isn't too late yet,' and I came on to New York and made Cyrill Wainwright believe as how I had actually done what Donna Marie wanted me to, and so he made the will he did, for he thought his own child was dead. I fooled with his niece for awhile, to see how the ground lay, and what I could do, and finally I brought my daughter up North, to set up her claim as the heiress. I could have succeeded, too, if the powers of hell hadn't stopped me. And now, I hope you'll excuse a mother's vanity and ambition for her child. My girl was pretty and bright and spirited, and I wanted to make a lady of her. I have, too!" she added, pointing to the sofa. "Look at her, and say if she isn't a lady—every inch a lady!" Their eyes followed the direction of her hand, and they saw a burning flush on the cheeks of poor Olive, and hot tears running down her cheeks.

But there was a frown on the ivory brow, too; and she looked like an angry tigress about to spring.

"Don't look at me," she cried. "I hate you—mother and all!"

The woman cowered before the indignant light in her child's eyes.

"Where is the Donna Marie's will?"

Every one started as the ghostly voice put this question; for none of them, save the Cuban herself, knew aught of the will spoken of, or had ever thought of it.

"It is here," answered the Cuban, pulling a parchment out of the bosom of her dress. "I gave it to the niece, but I stole it from her again," and she handed the folded document to Mr. Dobell.

He opened it to glance over it.

The young woman on the sofa rose, with the air of an offended queen—her large eyes flashed lightnings, her passion-curved lips quivered.

"Mother, I am going. You have made a fool of me as well as the rest of them. I spit at you! I despise you! You have taught me to look forward to being an heiress and living in pride and luxury—and now—what am I? What am I going to do? What will become of me? Oh, I could curse you all!" and trailing her long silken train through the humble room, she swept out.

Olive cast a glance of despair after her daughter—true daughter of her own illy-restrained, tempestuous, aspiring nature—and went out after her.

Ethel followed her into the hall.

"Madame," she said, holding the Cuban a moment by the arm, "I want to see you again. I want your daughter to visit me. Tell her that she has a friend in me—to do nothing rash. Give me your address—

are you where you have been for the past month?—well, I will come to-morrow to talk with and try to make friends with my foster-sister."

#### CHAPTER XXII.

NECTAR AND AMBROSIA.

ETHEL returned to her room, where her friends sat or stood, looking at each other in a bewildered way.

Although none of them believed in the communications from above being made by a ghost, they did not understand the mystery, and were puzzled, as well as astonished, at the unexpected turn the revelations had taken.

Ethel walked straight up to Bertram and put her arms around his neck.

"Can you realize that you have a sister?" she asked him. "Oh, how sweet it is to have a relative once more! My brother! My own darling, handsome brother! Do you know, I am going to be very fond of you?"

"I hope so," and Bertram actually brushed something from his eyes as he bent to kiss his sister. "I always was awfully fond of you, from the first."

"It seems like a dream!"

"A very pleasant dream, sister Ethel! I tell you what, I wish Coralie were here! What a splendid scene it would make! Like the transformation scene in a theater! You dissolve into some one else—I dissolve into some one else—everybody is nobody—nobody is everybody—nobody knows who—"

Here the door of Ethel's little bedroom opened and Lizette, the French maid, glided into their midst.

"Bon soir, mesdames et messieurs. Voici le fantôme!" she said, smiling round among the company in a manner rather free for one in her position.

"You—the ghost?" cried Bertram.

"Oui—oui, monsieur."

"A very pretty ghost, I declare!" cried Mr. Dobell.

"Yes. Lizette is the spirit who haunted poor Myra; who frightened the truth out of that wretch, Olive," asseverated Ethel. "Lizette, you did nobly to-night."

"Merci, chère mademoiselle."

"Ah! I wish Coralie were here!" again said Bertram, clutching at his gold locks in mock despair.

"How she would enjoy this melodrama, farce, or whatever we are minded to call it. By Jove, Lizette, my pretty one, you remind me of her—and there's a high compliment for you!"

"No time for flirting, Cadet Leigh," interrupted the lawyer; "I must know about the phantom business."

"Wait a moment, sir, until I bring this Miss Coralie, Clyde, and so satisfy the young gentleman," murmured Lizette, in broken English, dropping Mr. Dobell a coquettish courtesy and running into the bedroom again.

"The plot thickens!" cried Bertram, in mock-heroics—but he held very tightly his new sister's hand, whose loving eyes scarcely left the boy's glowing, handsome countenance.

"It seems strange that you are two years older than I!" said Ethel, "you seem such a boy!"

"Indeed! I'll let you know I'm about twenty-one!"

Poor Evelyn sat silent, devouring the couple with his eyes, jealous almost to fury at the tender looks and loving words lavished by Ethel on her light-hearted, beautiful brother.

"She will never waste a loving word on me!" he thought, bitterly.

In three minutes Lizette returned from the bedroom.

But, was it Lizette? Some change had come over her.

There was the print frock—there was the white, ruffled apron—the cunning cap on her dark locks.

"Coralie Clyde!" shouted Bertram, in astonishment.

Lizette pulled off the muslin cap and the false front—took the comb from her hair and let it fall about her shoulders, and stood revealed—Madcap Coralie!

All regarded her with astonishment, except Ethel.

"Don't look so surprised," she cried, in her own musical, joyous tones; "a little burnt sienna, a pair of heavy eyebrows and a false-front did it all. Come! praise me a little! This is the last dissolving view in the transformation scene!—am I not a pretty good actress? Have I not shown talent? spirit? courage?"

"You are a little fraud!" cried Bertram, deserting Ethel and seizing Coralie's hand. "A perfect little fraud! How about that letter all the way from Nantucket, eh?"

"That I wrote to my aunties?—oh, I wrote that in the Wainwright library and forwarded it to my uncle with a pressing request that he would attend to getting it mailed in some seaport town! That was easy enough!"

"But the rest was not so easy? Tell us about it," requested the lawyer. "Here! let us all place our chairs about this table, so as to form a cosey circle. Now, you little adventuress! what have you been about?"

"I really, really, really don't know what made me take the first rash step," began Coralie. "I was mad, I confess; but there seems to have been a method in my madness, after all! In view of the results, I think I may call my mad plot providential. You see," with a shy, shy glance from under her long drooping dark eyelashes at the cadet, "I could not—I really could not make up my mind to marry that John Garwell. There was my wedding-dress, and veil and so forth—and aunties were determined—so I just had to run away. Wouldn't you, if you had been in my place?" she added, turning suddenly upon Mr. Dobell.

"Well, yes," answered the lawyer, deliberately, "I think I should prefer running away to marrying the man you speak of."

"So I ran. While I was packing my bag to run, it came into my head that it would be a good joke on Mr. Garwell if I could place myself where I could observe his charming ways with other ladies. Out of this idea came my plan of presenting myself to Miss Myra Wainwright as a dressing-maid. The first evening of my flight I went over to West Philadelphia, and spent the night with a school-girl—a bosom friend of mine—who did not even let her parents know that I was there, but took me up to her room and smuggled my supper and breakfast in to me; and gave me the use of her paint-box to dye my skin and fix up my eyebrows—and went out and bought my false hair—and wrote me a first-class recommendation. She's a brick—that girl is! and I've promised she shall be my bridesmaid if I ever—" here Coralie broke off with a sudden blush which Bertram thought made her look most provokingly pretty.

"Well, that was the way I got a situation with my young lady. It was only for a lark at first. I used to laugh myself weak over Mr. Garwell's attentions to the new heiress; and I was awfully, awfully angry at the way Miss Myra treated my friend, Ethel, here; though I didn't know Ethel very well, then—but I knew it was mean of Miss Myra to treat her cousin so."

"At first, as I said, it was all in fun. But, one evening I got caught in the boudoir—I roamed about more than a servant ought, I daresay—and slipped behind a high chair, or an easel, or something, while Myra came in with the Cuban. I did not mean, at first, to hear what they said; but I could not help it; and after that I always tried to hear all I could, for I was convinced that Olive was making up lies and brewing mischief. I learned that she and Myra both meant to cheat my dear friend, here; and I invented a way of frightening them out of their plans. I took it upon myself to become Mr. Wainwright's ghost. Opportunely for my plans I discovered—behind Myra's high-headed bedstead, a speaking-tube which came out in one of the flowers of the wreath about the chandelier in the boudoir. I don't think the young lady knew about the tube, for she had not occupied that chamber long, and it was concealed by the bed. I found it quite by accident, having lost my thimble under the bed, and, squeezing myself up between the bed and the wall, I came upon the mouth of the speaking tube."

"I know all about it," here spoke up Ethel. "It was a singular tube, being intended for use only in the chamber. My father's mother had it put in, after she became an invalid, confined to her room. The boudoir was the library in those days; and she used to enjoy sending down messages to my grandfather, when he was reading or writing in the library. I have frightened many a visitor with that tube when I was a child. But, as you say, Myra may have known nothing about it; she has been there but a little over two years, and I tired of playing tricks with it longer ago than that."

"I practiced sepulchral tones whenever I was alone; and, having heard the family history from these two, I made the ghostly suggestions, warnings and threatenings, whenever I had a fitting opportunity. Poor Myra used to be frightened out of all comfort; I had to sleep with her, she was so timid; but I could not stop to pity her, I was so bent on seeing Miss Ethel righted."

"Did Miss Ethel know about these tricks of yours?"

"After awhile, Mr. Dobell. I came here and told her all; and I coaxed her to go with me—because I could not venture to run about alone at night—to further frighten the Cuban, and work on her superstitious nature, by looking in at her window, of evenings, masked in a Devil's head."

"But what made you suspect that the infant son of Mr. Wainwright was not dead?" asked the lawyer.

"Something in the woman's voice when she told the story. I knew she was lying, when she said he was dead, by a peculiar change in her voice."

"But did you associate this infant with our cadet, here? You are not a seer or a prophet to do that, Miss Clyde."

"No, but I am—I was very much interested in Mr. Leigh. He had told me, in the hospital, that he was a foundling—from some Southern country—and that the name, 'Cyrill,' on one of his baby garments, was the only clew he had to his parentage. Now it did not take me long to put two and two together and make four. Of course I did not know that our Bertram Leigh and this infant were one and the same—but I inferred it. I was bold enough to put the question to Olive this evening—and you see I was right!" smiling triumphantly.

"You were," assented the admiring lawyer.

"I did not know that she had not exchanged the little girls—but I believed it, and acted on my belief."

"You have done well—you have played your character of French maid to good purpose," said Mr. Dobell.

"She is a trump," added Bertram.

"Oh, I had lots of fun," ran on Coralie, dimpling at the memory of some of her tricks. "It was as good as a play to hear Garwell going over the same compliments and vows to Myra that he had done to me. I enjoyed that part of it. And had to exercise my ingenuity to devise various things to perplex Myra. I put a carmine saucer in the water of her wash-bowl, and the ghost called it blood, when she put her hands in the bowl. That time I used my powers as a ventriloquist. Fact, Bertram! practice gave me considerable skill in that line. Oh, I was always studying how to carry out my plot. Ethel used to be shocked when I told her—but I didn't



mind her being shocked, so that I compelled that wicked woman to confess."

"You deserve a leather medal," remarked Bertram, seriously.

"Is that my reward for all I have done for you, sir—given you a name, a sister and an inheritance? For shame!"

"You have given me something sweeter than all these!" cried the boy, in a sudden rapture. "Can you guess what? You have given me your own sweet self! Ah! I know the Misses Featherflight will begin to appreciate my good looks, my talents and amiable disposition, now that they will learn what are my letters of credit! You little madcap, you! I shall be allowed to go courting you now—and not be limited to fifteen minutes and the presence of Miss Priscilla!"

"Come, Mr. Dobell," said Evelyn, rising: "since these young folks have gone to love making before our very eyes I think we may be excused. We can talk about business to-morrow. Good-evening, all. I congratulate you on your little melodrama turning out so happily," and his fine, earnest eyes rested on Ethel with a melancholy smile, far sadder than as if he had not attempted to look cheerful.

Ethel looked at the closed door, when the two lawyers had gone, with a gentle, pitying shadow in her lovely eyes.

"I wish he were as happy as we are," she thought. But Bertram gave her little time for reflection. Now that the men of business were gone, he acted as if he were suddenly gone mad. He danced about, hugging first his sister and then Coralie—clapped his hands—turned a somersault—kissed the girls again; he was wild with joy and hope fulfilled.

"You are not going home to-night?" Ethel asked Coralie.

"No, I'm going to stay with you. My aunts think I am snug in bed; so I will let them rest; and to-morrow I will make to them a full and free confession."

Suddenly Bertram darted to the door.

"Where are you going, my brother?"

"To order in a jolly supper, fair sister."

"What will the good people of the house think?"

"Who cares what anybody thinks to-night. Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes! The Union forever! Oysters, woodcock, salad, ices, coffee—" he closed the door after him, and bounded down the narrow stairway, singing.

"Are you satisfied with him for a brother?" asked Coralie.

"You little witch! you know I am!"

"So am I."

"You forgot to tell them about the hole in the garret floor, above our heads, through which the ghost spoke his part this evening."

"Never mind. They will infer there was a hole there."

"Yes. You did a good work by inference, Coralie."

"Tyndal says that most scientific discoveries are made by the imagination. We imagine things; and then set to work to verify them. That was my process—so you see I am quite a scientist, Ethel."

"No one would have guessed it of such a madcap."

"And oh, I am such a happy mortal," added Coralie, with a sigh of deepest contentment. "And now—here comes Bertram, and we shall feast on nectar and ambrosia, and—"

"lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon,"

as Keats said; and—

"How happy, happy, happy,

How happy we shall be!"

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

##### FRUITION.

The delicate sweetness of a June evening brooded in the air which stirred softly in the large flower-garden that spread away from the south side of the roomy, old-fashioned cottage, for many years the Wainwrights' summer retreat.

Ethel Wainwright was standing there in the moonlight—lost in some deep dream—more motionless than the roses and lilies which crowded about her—for these waved gently in the moving air, while she stood still as a statue.

How beautiful she was!

The old bright expression had come back to her face. Her white dress clung to her youthful, slender figure with a tender grace; her brow was white as ivory—one might see the rich blood mantle in her velvet cheeks, even by moonlight.

Of what, or whom, was she dreaming?

Some one glided out from the shadow of the vine-wreathed porch and approached her—a girl as young, as charming as herself, but of a more passionate, tropical beauty; a girl whose round arms and whose superb bosom sparkled with jewels, and whose dress was of glimmering India mull, sprinkled with embroidered butterflies and silver stars.

"Ethel," whispered the intruder, with strange timidity, "may I speak to you?"

"Certainly, Olive. I did not know you were there."

"I have just come. Don Ignatio is in the parlor."

He has spoken to me; it is all settled."

"How, dear Olive?"

"We are to be married in four weeks."

"Are you certain that you love him, Olive?"

"I think I do. I have a great regard for him; and—he loves me, I know, and that makes me grateful to him. He is rich—rich enough to give me my wildest desires; and he will take me home to my beautiful land; so, Ethel, I am certain I shall be quite happy."

"I am so glad for you, dear Olive."

The girl threw herself on the other's bosom and sobbed out:

"I owe it all to you, dear Ethel. You came to me

and forced me to be your friend, when I hated you. You kept me from doing anything wicked—desperate. You took me to your own home—treated me as a sister—introduced me to your friends—to Don Ignatio. You have done everything for me!"

"No, you have done much for yourself. You fought to overcome temptation. I respect you, as well as love you, Olive. From my heart I congratulate you! Go back to the don and tell him how glad I am; and that I congratulate you both," and she fondly kissed the sobbing girl.

Left once more alone, Ethel began to walk up and down the broad garden path. It was a warm, dewless evening. She paced up and down with folded arms and lovely face lifted to the tranquil skies. She had suffered a great deal in the last year; but she seemed nearly at peace now.

For she had been generous and forgiving in all her conduct. She had not grasped at everything which she might have made her own. There was poor Myra! Mr. Dobell had talked with Myra and John Garwell, and had offered them, from her, if they would compromise quietly instead of compelling her to go to law, the money they had already wasted and fifty thousand dollars; and John had seen, very clearly, that it was best for him to accept the offer.

But he was a disappointed man; and an ugly one. Myra felt the dull effects of his disappointment, in his cruel treatment of her. If she had been his dog instead of his wife, he could not have treated her with so much contempt.

Ethel, thinking of them as she paced the garden path, foresaw that it would not be many years—or even months—before her cousin would be driven to give him up, and to take refuge with her, a broken-hearted woman, without aim or purpose in life.

"Myra plotted and planned for her heart's desire, and got it; but what has it availed her?" mused Ethel. "Poor, weak, foolish cousin! I would it were otherwise with you!"

It was pleasant to think of Olive—that foster-sister whom she had determined to rescue from the desperation of her unchecked anger and disappointment—from the unprincipled counsel of a bad mother. Olive had already found a lover who promised to be just the husband for the brilliant, beautiful, ambitious girl he had chosen. It was pleasant to think of Olive. The friend and protectress was well paid for what she had done for her.

It was pleasant to think of her brother, too; of his good heart, his amiable qualities, his beauty, his gay ways, and the mad love he made to Coralie Clyde, now that he had a good chance. It amused her to think what a pet he had become of the two old ladies, Coralie's Quaker aunts.

"They are a darling pair; I adore them both!" mused Ethel, linking her thoughts of Bertram to Coralie. "Coralie is coming to visit us to-morrow. It is delightful to see her and my brother together! I shall have two pairs of lovers to study to-morrow!" she thought, with a smile—but the smile ended in a sigh.

Perhaps it made Ethel sad to see so much love-making going on around her. Coralie and Olive had both asserted that she was too much of a saint to love any man; and that they expected to see her die an old maid. Ethel had seen too much of worthless protestations to be easily won. She walked up and down the flower-bound, moonlit path, like some fair spirit, too pure for thoughts of earthly love.

Some one had come silently into that sweet place and was watching her, while, in the shadow of a tall rose-bush, he waited until the throbbing of his heart was less violent, and he could speak to her without that betraying tremble in his voice.

It was Mr. Evelyn who stood there, waiting and watching.

He was only home from Cuba that afternoon.

He had been there on business connected with Donna Marie's will.

Miss Wainwright had sent him to tell the relatives who supposed themselves secure in the enjoyment of the property that she had no intention of dispossessing them—that they had a better right to the estates than she, though the law made them hers; but she should exact of them a handsome marriage-portion for Olive.

"It was Donna Marie who tempted the mother; and it will be just that her daughter shall have something," reasoned this Portia, when she made the provision.

The longer Evelyn, from his odorous covert, gazed upon the supple figure, on which the moon shone whitely, the faster his heart beat, the more his limbs trembled.

"If I am to speak to her at all I had best be about it," he concluded, "for my little courage is slipping away," and with that he stepped forward, so that when Ethel turned in her walk she would see him in the path before her.

"Mr. Evelyn!"

There was a sweet thrill in Ethel's voice, as she spoke his name. Then she stood quite still, and he could see the rich color rise in her cheeks until they were the hue of the roses beside her.

It was a full minute before she held out her hand, and added:

"How do you do? I did not know you had returned."

"I only returned to-day."

"Are you well? I was so sorry you went when the weather suddenly became so hot. I was afraid you would fall ill."

"Were you?" he murmured, hardly knowing what he was saying. "I did not suppose you would think of me at all."

"Did you arrange the business satisfactorily?" she asked, her voice faltering in spite of her efforts to

keep it firm. She was embarrassed by the intense look of those eager eyes fixed upon her beautiful face with such hopeless passion.

"Oh, yes. They were satisfied—and grateful. They will give Olive five thousand pounds—and they send this casket of jewels to you, as a token of their appreciation of your generosity. I thought I ought to deliver the casket into your own hands, as it is so valuable," he went on, as in a dream, "and so I pray you to excuse me for seeking you here; the man said I would find you in the garden."

"Thank you. You always are to be trusted, Mr. Evelyn," murmured Ethel, taking the casket from his extended hand.

"Do you think so?"

"I have always found it so."

"How beautiful it is out here in the moonlight," he went on.

"Then, will you walk here awhile? It is pleasanter than in the house."

"Oh, a million times pleasanter," he responded.

"May I take your arm, Mr. Evelyn?" she asked, with a smile.

He offered it, and they paced back and forth together.

The soft wind blew her dark hair against his shoulder; her white hand lay lightly on his arm. It was too bad—it was *cruel*—to try him thus, he thought. She might have had some consideration for him—might have known that a man who loves a woman cannot look at her divine eyes in the moonlight, and not grow mad if she will not love him in return. The lilies glimmering in the night—the breath of the roses—the notes of a drowsy bird—the sight of that loveliest, purest face beside him—overcame the pride, the resistance of a man not easily conquered.

Suddenly he turned and paused. His eyes searched the eyes that slowly drooped beneath his regard.

"You know that I love you," he said, almost as if his teeth were clenched in pain. "Why, then, are you so kind to me? Do you think I can be with you here, under God's holy heaven, and not pour out the burning words that beat at my lips? Why do you try me? Why do you allow me to be with you at all? You are no coquette, Ethel Wainwright, or I should accuse you of trifling with me to-night. Why do you stand and smile at me now? Why do you blush? Great Heaven! Am I to be mocked with these sweet blushes! Why do you not sneer instead of smile, girl? Why do you not tell me to go about my business?—that I have no right to aspire—to wish—to hope—to die for you?" he concluded, with a heavy sigh, that seemed to rend his heart.

Ethel turned pale as she stood there; but with a brave effort she lifted her shining eyes to his face and answered:

"Because I love you, Mr. Evelyn."

"Love me?"

"Yes, I think so," with a little resigned smile. "I don't know when it began, I am sure—or why, or how—but I begin to realize that it is so. Yes, I think I may say, truly, that I am following the example of all the rest—that I am in love—and with you," in a sweet, thrilling whisper.

Here let us roll down the curtain upon the moonlight, the roses, the dark hair, the white dress—the two figures which stand under the deep, azure sky.

True life is just beginning for these young people. Let us hope that their future history may be such as should happen to youth and beauty and goodness.

THE END.

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